The Tafsir of Surat Al-Kahf

(Chapter - 18)

Which was revealed in Makkah

What has been mentioned about the Virtues of this Surah and the first and last ten Ayat, which provide protection from the Dajjal

Imam Ahmad recorded that Al-Bara' said: "A man recited Al-Kahf and there was an animal in the house which began acting in a nervous manner. He looked, and saw a fog or cloud overhead. He mentioned this to the Prophet , who said:

«اقْرَأْ فُلَانُ، فَإِنَّهَا السَّكِينَةُ تَنْزِلُ عِنْدَ الْقُرْآنِ أَوْ تَنَزَّلَتْ لِلْقُرْآنِ»

(Keep on reciting so and so, for this is the tranquillity which descends when one reads Qur'an or because of reading Qur'an;) This was also recorded in the Two Sahihs. This man who recited it was Usayd bin Al-Hudayr, as we have previously mentioned in our Tafsir of Surat Al-Baqarah. Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Ad-Darda' that the Prophet said:

«مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنَ الدَّجَّالِ»

(Whoever memorizes ten Ayat from the beginning of Surat Al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjal.) This was also recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and At-Tirmidhi. According to the version recorded by At-Tirmidhi,

«مَنْ حَفِظَ ثَلَاثَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الْكَهْفِ»

(Whoever memorizes three Ayat from the beginning of Al-Kahf.) He said, it is "Hasan Sahih." In his Mustadrak, Al-Hakim recorded from Abu Sa`id that the Prophet said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ فِي يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ أَضَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ النُّورِ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجُمُعَتَيْنِ»

(Whoever recites Surat Al-Kahf on Friday, it will illuminate him with light from one Friday to the next.) Then he said: "This Hadith has a Sahih chain, but they (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not record it." Al-Hafiz Abu Bakr Al-Bayhaqi also recorded it in his Sunan from Al-Hakim, then he narrated with his own chain that the Prophet said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ كَمَا نَزَلَتْ، كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(Whoever recites Surat Al-Kahf as it was revealed, it will be a light for him on the Day of Resurrection.)

(بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

(الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِى أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَـبَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَل لَّهُ عِوَجَا - قَيِّماً لِّيُنْذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّـلِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا - مَّاكِثِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا - وَيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا - مَّا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلاَ لاًّبَآئِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِن يَقُولُونَ إِلاَّ كَذِبًا)

(1. All praise is due to Allah, Who has sent down to His servant the Book, and has not placed therein any crookedness.) (2. (He has made it) straight to give warning of a severe punishment from Him, and to give good news to the believers, who do righteous deeds, that they shall have a fair reward.) (3. They shall abide therein forever.) (4. And to warn those who say, "Allah has

begotten a child.") (5. No knowledge have they of such a thing, nor had their fathers. Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths. They utter nothing but a lie.)

The Revelation of the Qur'an brings both Good News and a Warning

In the beginning of this Tafsir, we mentioned that Allah, praises His Holy Self at the beginning and end of matters, for He is the One to be praised in all circumstances, all praise and thanks be to Him, in the beginning and in the end. He praises Himself for revealing His Mighty Book to His Noble Messenger Muhammad , which is the greatest blessing that Allah has granted the people of this earth. Through the Qur'an, He brings them out of the darkness into light. He has made it a Book that is straight, neither distorted nor confusion therein. It clearly guides to a straight path, plain and manifest, giving a warning to the disbelievers and good news to the believers. This is why Allah says:

(وَلَمْ يَجْعَل لَّهُ عِوَجَا)

(and has not placed therein any crookedness.) meaning, there is nothing twisted or confusing about it. But He has made it balanced and straightforward as He said;

(قَيِّماً)

((He has made it) straight), meaning straightforward,

(لِّيُنْذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ)

(to give warning of a severe punishment from Him,) meaning, to those who oppose His Prophet and disbelieve in His Book, He issues a warning of severe punishment hastened in this world and postponed to the world Hereafter.

(مِن لَّدُنْهُ)

(from Him) means, from Allah. For none can punish as He punishes and none is stronger or more reliable than Him.

(وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(and to give good news to the believers,) means, those who believe in this Qur'an and confirm their faith by righteous actions.

(أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا)

(that they shall have a fair reward.) means, a beautiful reward from Allah.

(مَّاكِثِينَ فِيهِ)

(They shall abide therein) means, in what Allah rewards them with, and that is Paradise, where they will live forever.

(أَبَدًا)

(forever.) means, for always, never ending or ceasing to be.

(وَيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا)

(And to warn those who say, "Allah has begotten a child.") Ibn Ishaq said: "These are the pagan Arabs, who said, ` We worship the angels who are the daughters of Allah.'"

(مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ)

(No knowledge have they of such a thing,) meaning, this thing that they have fabricated and made up.

(وَلاَ لاِبَآئِهِمْ)

(nor had their fathers.) meaning, their predecessors.

(كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً)

(Mighty is the word) This highlights the seriousness and enormity of the lie they have made up. Allah says:

(كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ)

(Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths.) meaning, it has no basis apart from what they say, and they have no evidence for it apart from their own lies and fabrications. Hence Allah says:

(إِن يَقُولُونَ إِلاَّ كَذِبًا)

(They utter nothing but a lie.)

Reason why this Surah was revealed

Muhammad bin Ishaq mentioned the reason why this Surah was revealed. He said that an old man from among the people of Egypt who came to them some forty-odd years ago told him, from `Ikrimah that Ibn `Abbas said: "The Quraysh sent An-Nadr bin Al-Harith and `Uqbah bin Abi Mu`it to the Jewish rabbis in Al-Madinah, and told them: `Ask them (the rabbis) about Muhammad, and describe him to them, and tell them what he is saying. They are the people of the first Book, and they have more knowledge of the Prophets than we do.' So they set out and when they reached Al-Madinah, they asked the Jewish rabbis about the Messenger of Allah . They described him to them and told them some of what he had said. They said, `You are the people of the Tawrah and we have come to you so that you can tell us about this companion of ours.' They (the rabbis) said, `Ask him about three things which we will tell you to ask, and if he answers them then he is a Prophet who has been sent (by Allah); if he does not, then he is saying things that are not true, in which case how you will deal with him will be up to you. Ask him about some young men in ancient times, what was their story For theirs is a strange and wondrous tale. Ask him about a man who travelled a great deal and reached the east and the west of the earth. What was his story And ask him about the Ruh (soul or spirit) -- what is it If he tells you about these things, then he is a Prophet, so follow him, but if he does not tell you, then he is a man who is making things up, so deal with him as you see fit.' So An-Nadr and `Uqbah left and came back to the Quraysh, and said: `O people of Quraysh, we have come to you with a decisive solution which will put an end to the problem between you and Muhammad. The Jewish rabbis told us to ask him about some matters,' and they told the Quraysh what they were. Then they came to the Messenger of Allah and said, `O Muhammad, tell us,' and they asked him about the things they had been told to ask. The Messenger of Allah said,

«أُخْبِرُكُمْ غَدًا عَمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ عَنْه»

(I will tell you tomorrow about what you have asked me.) but he did not say `If Allah wills.' So they went away, and the Messenger of Allah stayed for fifteen days without any revelation from Allah concerning that, and Jibril, peace be upon him, did not come to him either. The people of Makkah started to doubt him, and said, `Muhammad promised to tell us the next day, and now fifteen days have gone by and he has not told us anything in response to the questions we asked.' The Messenger of Allah felt sad because of the delay in revelation, and was grieved by what the people of Makkah were saying about him. Then Jibril came to him from Allah with the Surah about the companions of Al-Kahf, which also contained a rebuke for feeling sad about the idolators. The Surah also told him about the things they had asked him about, the young men and the traveler. The question about the Ruh was answered in the Ayah;

(وَيَسْـَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ)

(And they ask you concerning the Ruh (the spirit); say: "The Ruh..."))17:85(.

(فَلَعَلَّكَ بَـخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَى ءَاثَـرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهَـذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفاً - إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الاٌّرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُم أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً - وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيداً جُرُزاً)

(6. Perhaps, you would kill yourself in grief, over their footsteps, because they believe not in this narration.) (7. Verily, we have made that which is on earth an adornment for it, in order that We may test which of them are best in deeds.) (8. And verily, We shall make all that is on it bare, dry soil.)

Do not feel sorry because the Idolators do not believe Allah consoles His Messenger for his sorrow over the idolators because they would not believe and keep away from him. He also said:

(فَلاَ تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرَتٍ)

(So destroy not yourself in sorrow for them.))35:8(

(وَلاَ تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ)

(And grieve not over them.))16:127(

(لَعَلَّكَ بَـخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ أَلاَّ يَكُونُواْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(It may be that you are going to kill yourself with grief, that they do not become believers.))26:3(meaning, maybe you will destroy yourself with your grief over them. Allah says:

(فَلَعَلَّكَ بَـخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَى ءَاثَـرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهَـذَا الْحَدِيثِ)

(Perhaps, you would kill yourself in grief, over their footsteps, because they believe not in this narration.) meaning the Qur'an.

(أَسَفاً)

(in grief) Allah is saying, `do not destroy yourself with regret.' Qatadah said: "killing yourself with anger and grief over them." Mujahid said: "with anxiety." These are synonymous, so the meaning is: `Do not feel sorry for them, just convey the Message of Allah to them. Whoever goes the right way, then he goes the right way only for the benefit of himself. And whoever goes astray, then he strays at his own loss, so do not destroy yourself in sorrow for them.'

This World is the Place of Trial Then Allah tells us that He has made this world a temporary abode, adorned with transient beauty, and He made it a place of trial, not a place of settlement. So He says:

(إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الاٌّرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُم أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً)

(Verily, we have made that which is on earth an adornment for it, in order that We may test which of them are best in deeds.) Abu Maslamah narrated from Abu Nadrah from Abu Sa`id that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ، وَإِنَّ اللهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَنَاظِرٌ مَاذَا تَعْمَلُونَ، فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا، وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ فِتْنَةِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَتْ فِي النِّسَاءِ»

(This world is sweet and green, and Allah makes you generations succeeding one another, so He is watching what you will do. Beware of (the beguilements of) this world and beware of women, for the first affliction that Children of Israel suffered from was that of women.) Then Allah tells us that this world will pass away and come to an end, as He says:

(وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيداً جُرُزاً)

(And verily, We shall make all that is on it bare, dry soil.) means, `after having adorned it, We will destroy it and make everything on it bare and dry, with no vegetation or any other benefit.' Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas that this means everything on it would be wiped out and destroyed. Mujahid said: "a dry and barren plain." Qatadah said, "A plain on which there are no trees or vegetation."

(أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَـبَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُواْ مِنْ ءَايَـتِنَا عَجَبًا - إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُواْ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّىءْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا - فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى ءَاذَانِهِمْ فِى الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا - ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَـهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُواْ أَمَدًا)

(9. Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim were a wonder among Our signs) (10. When the young men fled for refuge to Al-Kahf. They said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from

Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!") (11. Therefore, We covered up their hearing in Al-Kahf for a number of years.) (12. Then We raised them up, that We might test which of the two parties was best at calculating the time period they tarried.)

The Story of the People of Al-Kahf Here Allah tells us about the story of the people of Al-Kahf in brief and general terms, then He explains it in more detail. He says:

(أَمْ حَسِبْتَ)

(Do you think) -- O Muhammad --

(أَنَّ أَصْحَـبَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُواْ مِنْ ءَايَـتِنَا عَجَبًا)

(that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim were a wonder among Our signs) meaning, their case was not something amazing compared to Our power and ability, for the creation of the heavens and earth, the alternation of night and day and the subjugation of the sun, moon and heavenly bodies, and other mighty signs indicate the great power of Allah and show that He is able to do whatever He wills. He is not incapable of doing more amazing things than the story of the people of the Cave. Similarly, Ibn Jurayj reported Mujahid saying about,

(أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَـبَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُواْ مِنْ ءَايَـتِنَا عَجَبًا)

(Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim were a wonder among Our signs) "Among Our signs are things that are more amazing than this." Al-`Awfi reported that Ibn `Abbas said:

(أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَـبَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُواْ مِنْ ءَايَـتِنَا عَجَبًا)

(Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim were a wonder among Our signs) "What I have given to you of knowledge, the Sunnah and the Book is far better than the story of the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim." Muhammad bin Ishaq said: "(It means) I have not shown My creatures a proof more amazing than the story of the people of the Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqim." iAl-Kahf refers to a cave in a mountain, which is where the young men sought refuge. With regard to the word Ar-Raqim, Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas that it is a valley near Aylah. This was also said)in another narration(by `Atiyah Al-`Awfi and Qatadah. Ad-Dahhak said: "As for Al-Kahf, it is a cave in the valley, and Ar-Raqim is the name of the valley." Mujahid said, "Ar-Raqim refers to their buildings." Others said it refers to the valley in which their cave was.

`Abdur-Razzaq recorded that Ibn `Abbas said about Ar-Raqim: "Ka`b used to say that it was the town." Ibn Jurayj reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "Ar-Raqim is the mountain in which the cave was." Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "Ar-Raqim is a tablet of stone on which they wrote the story of the people of the Cave, then they placed it at the entrance to the Cave."

(إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُواْ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّىءْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا)

((Remember) when the young men fled for refuge to Al-Kahf. They said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!") Here Allah tells us about those young men who fled from their people for the sake of their religion, fearing persecution. So they fled taking refuge in the cave of a mountain, where they hid from their people. When they entered the cave, they asked Allah to show mercy and kindness towards them,

(رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً)

(Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself,) meaning, `give us Your mercy and conceal us from our people.'

(وَهَيِّىءْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا)

(and facilitate for us our affair in the right way.) means, direct our matter well, i.e., grant us a good end. As was reported in the Hadith:

«وَمَا قَضَيْتَ لَنَا مِنْ قَضَاءٍ فَاجْعَلْ عَاقِبَتَهُ رَشَدًا»

(Whatever You have decreed for us, make its consequences good).

(فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى ءَاذَانِهِمْ فِى الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا)

(Therefore, We covered up their hearing in the cave for a number of years.) meaning, `We caused them to sleep when they entered the cave, and they slept for many years.'

(ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَـهُمْ)

(Then We raised them up) from that slumber, and one of them went out with his Dirhams (silver coins) to buy them some food, as it will be discussed in more detail below. Allah says:

(ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَـهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الحِزْبَيْنِ)

(Then We raised them up, that We might test which of the two parties) meaning, the two parties who disputed about them,

(أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُواْ أَمَدًا)

(was best at calculating the time period that they tarried.) It was said that this refers to how long they stayed in the cave.

(نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ ءَامَنُواْ بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَـهُمْ هُدًى - وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُواْ فَقَالُواْ رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ لَن نَّدْعُوَاْ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَـهاً لَّقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا - هَـؤُلاَءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذْواْ مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّوْلاَ يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَـنٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا - وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إَلاَّ اللَّهَ فَأْوُواْ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُم مِّن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّىءْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِّرْفَقًا)

(13. We narrate unto you their story with truth: Truly, they were young men who believed in their Lord (Allah), and We increased them in guidance.) (14. And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than Him; if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief.) (15. These our people have taken for worship gods other than Him. Why do they not bring for them a clear authority And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah.) (16. (The young men said to one another:) "And when you withdraw from them, and that which they worship, except Allah, then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will open a way for you from His mercy and will make easy for you your affair.")

Their Belief in Allah and their Retreat from their People

From here Allah begins to explain the story in detail. He states that they were boys or young men, and that they were more accepting of the truth and more guided than the elders who had

become stubbornly set in their ways and clung to the religion of falsehood. For the same reason, most of those who responded to Allah and His Messenger were young people. As for the elders of Quraysh, most of them kept to their religion and only a few of them became Muslims. So Allah tells us that the people of the cave were young men. Mujahid said, "I was informed that some of them wore some kind of earrings, then Allah guided them and inspired them to fear Him, so they recognized His Oneness, and bore witness that there is no god besides Him."

(وَزِدْنَـهُمْ هُدًى)

(and We increased them in guidance.) From this and other similar Ayat, several scholars, such as Al-Bukhari and others, understood that faith may increase, that it may vary in degrees, and that it may fluctuate. Allah says:

(وَزِدْنَـهُمْ هُدًى)

(and We increased them in guidance.) as He said elsewhere:

(وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْاْ زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَـهُمْ تَقُوَاهُمْ)

(While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their Taqwa.))47:17(

(فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءامَنُواْ فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَـناً وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ)

(As for those who believe, it has increased their faith, and they rejoice.))9:124(,

(لِيَزْدَادُواْ إِيمَـناً مَّعَ إِيمَـنِهِمْ)

(...that they may grow more in faith along with their (present) faith.))48:4(There are other Ayat indicating the same thing. It has been mentioned that they were followers of the religion of Al-Masih `Isa, `Isa bin Maryam, but Allah knows best. It seems that they lived before the time of Christianity altogether, because if they had been Christians, the Jewish rabbis would not have cared about preserving because of their differences. We have mentioned above the report from Ibn `Abbas that the Quraysh sent a message to the Jewish rabbis in Al-Madinah to ask them for things with which they could test the Messenger of Allah , and they told them to ask him about these young men, and about Dhul-Qarnayn (the man who traveled much) and about the Ruh. This indicates that this story was something recorded in the books of the People of the Book, and that it came before Christianity. And Allah knows best.

(وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُواْ فَقَالُواْ رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ)

(And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth,) Here Allah is saying: `We gave them the patience to go against their people and their city, and to leave behind the life of luxury and ease that they had been living.' Several of the earlier and later Tafsir scholars have mentioned that they were sons of the kings and leaders of Byzantium, and that they went out one day to one of the festivals of their people. They used to gather once a year outside the city, and they would worship idols and offer sacrifices to them. They had an arrogant, tyrannical king who was called Decianus, who commanded and encouraged the people to do that. When the people went out to attend this gathering, these young men went out with their fathers and their people, and when they saw their people's actions with clear insight, they realized that the prostrations and sacrifices the people were offering to their idols should only be dedicated to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth. Each of them started to withdraw from his people and keep aloof from them. The first one of them to move away on his own went and sat in the shade of a tree, then another came and sat with him, then another came and sat with them, then four more followed suit one by one. None of them knew the others, but they were brought together by the One Who instilled faith in their hearts. As it says in the Hadith recorded by Al-Bukhari with an incomplete chain of narrators from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Messenger of Allah said:

«الْأَرْوَاحُ جُنُودٌ مُجَنَّدَةٌ، فَمَا تَعَارَفَ مِنْهَا ائْتَلَفَ وَمَا تَنَاكَرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَف»

(Souls are like recruited soldiers. Those that recognize one another will come together, and those that do not recognize one another will turn away from each another). Muslim also recorded this in his Sahih from the Hadith of Suhayl from his father from Abu Hurayrah from the Messenger of Allah . People say that similar qualities or characteristics are what bring people together. So each of the young men was trying to conceal what he really believed from the others, out of fear of them, not knowing that they were like him. Then one of them said, "O people, you know by Allah that only one thing is making you leave your people and isolate yourselves from them, so let each one of you say what it is in his case." Another said, "As for me, by Allah I saw what my people are doing and I realized that it was false, and that the only One Who deserves to be worshipped Alone with out partner or associate is Allah Who created everything, the heavens, the earth and everything in between." Another said, "By Allah, the same thing happened to me." The others said the same, and they all agreed and became brothers in faith. They adopted a particular location as a place of worship and began worshipping Allah there, but their people found out about them and told their king about them. The king ordered them to appear before him, and asked them about their beliefs. They told him the truth and called him to Allah, as Allah says about them:

(وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُواْ فَقَالُواْ رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ لَن نَّدْعُوَاْ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَـهاً)

(And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than Him...") "Never" (Lan) implies an absolute and eternal negation, meaning, `this will never happen, and if we were to do that it would be false.' So Allah says about them:

(لَّقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا)

(...if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief.) meaning, untruth and utter falsehood.

(هَـؤُلاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّوْلاَ يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَـنٍ بَيِّنٍ)

(These, our people, have taken for worship gods other than Him (Allah). Why do they not bring for them a clear authority) meaning, why do they not produce some clear evidence and genuine proof for their behavior

(فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا)

(And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah.) They said: `but by saying that they are lying transgressors.' It was said that when they called their king to believe in Allah, he refused, and warned and threatened them. He commanded them to be stripped of their clothing bearing the adornments of their people, then he gave them some time to think about the situation, hoping that they would return to their former religion. This was a way that Allah showed kindness for them, because during that time they managed to escape from him and flee from persecution for the sake of their religion. This is what is prescribed in the Shari`ah during times of trial and persecution -- a person who fears for his religion should flee from his persecutors, as was reported in the Hadith:

«يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرُ مَالِ أَحَدِكُمْ غَنَمًا يَتْبَعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ الْقَطْرِ يَفِرُّ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ»

(Soon there will come a time when the best wealth any of you can have will be sheep, which he can follow to the tops of the mountains and places where rain falls, (fleeing) for the sake of his religion from persecution.) In such cases, it is allowed to seclude oneself from people, but this is not prescribed in any other case, because by such seclusion one loses the benefits of congregational and Friday prayers. These young men were determined to flee from their people, and Allah decreed that for them, as He says about them,

(وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ)

(And when you withdraw from them, and that which they worship, except Allah,) meaning, when you depart from them and follow a different religion, opposing their worship of others besides Allah, then separate from them in a physical sense too,

(فَأْوُواْ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُم مِّن رَّحْمَتِهِ)

(then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will open a way for you from His mercy) meaning, He will bestow His mercy upon you, by which He will conceal you from your people.

(وَيُهَيِّىءْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِّرْفَقًا)

(and will make easy for you your affair.) means, He will give you what you need. So they left and fled to the cave where they sought refuge. Then their people noticed they were missing, and the king looked for them, and it was said when he could not find them that Allah concealed them from him so that he could not find any trace of them or any information about them, as Allah concealed His Prophet Muhammad and his Companion)Abu Bakr(As-Siddiq, when they sought refuge in the cave of Thawr. The Quraysh idolators came in pursuit, but they did not find him even though they passed right by him. When the Messenger of Allah noticed that As-Siddiq was anxious and said, "O Messenger of Allah, if one of them looks down at the place of his feet, he will see us," he told him:

«يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ مَا ظَنُّكَ بِاثْنَيْنِ اللهُ ثَالِثُهُمَا؟»

(O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two who have Allah as their third) And Allah said:

(إِلاَّ تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِى الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لاَ تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِىَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(If you help him not, for Allah did indeed help him when the disbelievers drove him out, the second of the two; when they were in the cave, he said to his companion: "Do not grieve, surely, Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His tranquillity upon him, and strengthened him with forces which you saw not, and made the word of those who disbelieved the lower, while the Word of Allah became the higher; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.))9:40(-The story of this cave (Thawr) is far greater and more wondrous than that of the people of the Cave.

(وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَت تَّزَاوَرُ عَن كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَت تَّقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِى فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ ذلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا)

(17. And you might have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the midst of the cave. That is from the Ayat of Allah. He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no guardian to lead him.)

The Location of the Cave This indicates that the entrance to the cave faced north, because Allah tells us that when the sun was rising, sunlight entered the cave

(ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ)

(the right), meaning that the shade decreased towards the right, as Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id bin Jubayr and Qatadah said:

(تَّزَاوَرُ)

(declining) means leaning. Every time the sun rises on the horizon, its rays decline until there is nothing left in such a place when it reaches its zenith. So Allah said,

(وَإِذَا غَرَبَت تَّقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ)

(and when it set, turning away from them to the left,) meaning, it entered their cave from the left of its entrance, which means from the west. This proves what we say, and it is clear to anyone who thinks about the matter and has some knowledge of astronomy and the paths of the sun, moon and stars. If the entrance of the cave faced east, nothing would have entered it when the sun set, and if it faced the direction of the Qiblah (in this case, south), nothing would have entered it at the time of sunrise or sunset, and the shadows would have leaned neither to the right nor the left. If it had faced west, nothing would have entered it at the time of sunrise, until after the sun had passed its zenith, and would have stayed until sunset. This supports what we have said, and to Allah is the praise. Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and Qatadah said that "turning away from them" means that it would shine on them and then leave them. Allah has told us this, and He wants us to understand it and ponder its meaning, but He did not tell

us the location of this cave, i.e., in which country on earth it is, because there is no benefit for us in knowing that, and no legislative objective behind it. If there was any spiritual or religious interest that could be served by our knowing that, Allah and His Messenger would have taught us about it, as the Prophet said:

«مَا تَرَكْتُ شَيْئًا يُقَرِّبُكُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَيُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَّا وَقَدْ أَعْلَمْتُكُمْ بِه»

(I have not left anything that will bring you closer to Paradise and keep you further away from Hell but I have certainly taught you about it.) So Allah has told us about the features of the cave, but He did not tell us where it is, and He said,

﴿وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَت تَّزَاوَرُ عَن كَهْفِهِمْ﴾

(And you might have seen the sun, when it rose, declining from their cave.) Malik narrated from Zayd bin Aslam, "Leaning."

﴿ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَت تَّقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِى فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ﴾

(the right, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the midst of the cave.) meaning, the sun entered the cave without touching them, because if it had touched them, it would have burnt their bodies and clothes. This was the view of Ibn `Abbas.

﴿ذلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

(That is from the Ayat of Allah), how He guided them to this cave where He kept them alive, and the sun and wind entered the cave preserving their bodies. Allah says,

﴿ذلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

(That is from the Ayat of Allah.) Then He says:

﴿مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ﴾

(He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly-guided;) meaning that He is the One Who guided these young men to true guidance among their people, for the one whom Allah guides is truly guided, and the one whom Allah leaves astray will find no one to guide him.

(وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا)

(18. And you would have thought them awake, whereas they were asleep. And We turned them on their right and on their left sides, and their dog stretching forth his two forelegs at the Wasid. Had you happened upon them, you would certainly have turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with awe of them.)

Their Sleep in the Cave

Some of the scholars mentioned that when Allah caused them to sleep, their eyelids did not close, lest disintegration took hold of them. If their eyes remained open to the air, this would be better for the sake of preservation. Allah says:

(وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ)

(And you would have thought them awake, whereas they were asleep.) It was mentioned that when the wolf sleeps, it closes one eye and keeps one eye open, then it switches eyes while asleep.

(وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ)

(And We turned them on their right and on their left sides,) Ibn `Abbas said: "If they did not turn over, the earth would have consumed them."

(وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالوَصِيدِ)

(and their dog stretching forth his two forelegs at the Wasid) Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr and Qatadah said: "The Wasid means the threshold." Ibn `Abbas said: "By the door." It was said: "On the ground." The correct view is that it means on the threshold, i.e., at the door.

(إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ)

(Verily, it shall be closed upon them))104:8(Their dog lay down at the door, as is the habit of dogs. Ibn Jurayj said, "He was guarding the door for them." It was his nature and habit to lie down at their door as if guarding them. He was sitting outside the door, because the angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog, as was reported in As-Sahih, nor do they enter a

house in which there is an image, a person in a state of ritual impurity or a disbeliever, as was narrated in the Hasan Hadith. The blessing they enjoyed extended to their dog, so the sleep that overtook them overtook him too. This is the benefit of accompanying good people, and so this dog attained fame and stature. It was said that he was the hunting dog of one of the people which is the more appropriate view, or that he was the dog of the king's cook, who shared their religious views, and brought his dog with him. And Allah knows best. Allah says:

(لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا)

(Had you happened upon them, you would certainly have turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with awe of them.) meaning that Allah made them appear dreadful, so that no one could look at them without being filled with terror, because of the frightening appearance they had been given. This was so that no one would come near them or touch them until the appointed time when their sleep would come to an end as Allah willed, because of the wisdom, clear proof and great mercy involved in that.

(وَكَذٰلِكَ بَعَثْنَـهُمْ لِيَتَسَآءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَم لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُواْ لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُواْ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُواْ أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَـذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَآ أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلاَ يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا - إِنَّهُمْ إِن يَظْهَرُواْ عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِى مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَن تُفْلِحُواْ إِذًا أَبَدًا)

(19. Likewise, We woke them that they might question one another. A speaker among them said: "How long have you stayed (here)" They said: "We have stayed a day or part of a day." They said: "Your Lord knows best how long you have stayed (here). So send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the town, and let him find out which is the Azka food, and bring some of that to you. And let him be careful and let no man know of you.") (20. "For, if they come to know of you, they will stone you or turn you back to their religion; and in that case you will never be successful.")

(كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ)

(How long have you stayed (here)) meaning, `how long have you slept'

(قَالُواْ لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ)

(They said: "We have stayed a day or part of a day.") because they entered the cave at the beginning of the day, and they woke up at the end of the day, which is why they then said,

(أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُواْ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ)

("...or a part of a day." They said: "Your Lord knows best how long you have stayed...") meaning, `Allah knows best about your situation.' It seems that they were not sure about how long they had slept, and Allah knows best. Then they turned their attention to more pressing matters, like their need for food and drink, so they said:

(فَابْعَثُواْ أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ)

(So send one of you with this silver coin of yours) They had brought with them some Dirhams (silver coins) from their homes, to buy whatever they might need, and they had given some in charity and kept some, so they said:

(فَابْعَثُواْ أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَـذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ)

(So send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the town,) meaning to their city, which they had left. The definite article indicates that they were referring to a known city.

(فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَآ أَزْكَى طَعَامًا)

(and let him find out which is the Azka food.) Azka means "purest", as Allah says elsewhere,

(وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَى مِنكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَداً)

(And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure)Zaka(from sins))24:21(and

(قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّى)

(Indeed whosoever purifies himself)Tazakka(shall achieve success.))87:14(From the same root also comes the word Zakah, which makes one's wealth good and purifies it.

(وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ)

(And let him be careful) meaning when he goes out buying food and coming back. They were telling him to conceal himself as much as he could,

(وَلاَ يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًاإِنَّهُمْ إِن يَظْهَرُواْ عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ)

(and let no man know of you. For, if they come to know of you, they will stone you) means, `if they find out where you are,'

(يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِى مِلَّتِهِمْ)

(they will stone you or turn you back to their religion;) They were referring to the followers of Decianus, who they were afraid might find out where they were, and punish them with all kinds of torture until they made them go back to their former religion, or until they died, for if they agreed to go back to their (old) religion, they would never attain success in this world or the Hereafter. So they said:

(وَلَن تُفْلِحُواْ إِذًا أَبَدًا)

(and in that case you will never be successful.)

(وَكَذلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَـزَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُواْ ابْنُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَـنًا رَّبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُواْ عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا)

(21. And thus We made their case known, that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour. (Remember) when they (the people) disputed among themselves about their case, they said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them," (then) those who won their point said: "We verily, shall build a place of worship over them.")

How the People of the City came to know about Them; building a Memorial over the Cave

(وَكَذلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ)

(And thus We made their case known,) means, `We caused the people to find them.'

(لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهَا)

(that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour.) Several scholars of the Salaf mentioned that the people of that time were skeptical about the Resurrection. `Ikrimah said: "There was a group of them who said that the souls would be resurrected but not the bodies, so Allah resurrected the people of the Cave as a sign and proof of resurrection." They mentioned that when they wanted to send one of their members out to the city to buy them something to eat, he disguised himself and set out walking by a different route, until he reached the city, which they said was called Daqsus. He thought that it was not long since he left it, but in fact century after century, generation after generation, nation after nation had passed, and the country and its people had changed. He saw no local landmarks that he recognized, and he did not recognize any of the people, elite or commoners. He began to feel confused and said to himself, "Maybe I am crazy or deluded, maybe I am dreaming." Then he said, "By Allah, I am nothing of the sort, what I know I saw last night was different from this." Then he said, "I had better get out of here." Then he went to one of the men selling food, gave him the money he had and asked him to sell him some food. When the man saw the money he did not recognize it or its imprint, so he passed it to his neighbor and they all began to pass it around, saying, "Maybe this man found some treasure." They asked him who he was and where he got this money. Had he found a treasure Who was he He said, "I am from this land, I was living here yesterday and Decianus was the ruler." They accused him of being crazy and took him to the governor who questioned him about his circumstances, and he told him. He was confused about his situation. When he told them about it, they -- the king and the people of the city -- went with him to the cave, where he told them, "Let me go in first and let my companions know." It was said that the people did not know how he entered it, and that the people did not know about their story. It was also said that they did enter the cave and see them, and the king greeted them and embraced them. Apparently he was a Muslim, and his name was Tedosis. They rejoiced at meeting him and spoke with him, then they bid farewell to him and went back to sleep, then Allah caused them to die. And Allah knows best. A

(وَكَذلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ)

(And thus We made their case known,) meaning, `just as We caused them to sleep then woke them up physically intact, We made their story known to the people of that time.'

(لِيَعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَـزَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ)

(that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour. (Remember) when they (the people) disputed among themselves about their case,) meaning, about Resurrection. Some believed in it and some denied it, so Allah made their discovery of the people of the cave evidence either in their favor or against them.

(فَقَالُواْ ابْنُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَـنًا رَّبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ)

(they said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them,") meaning, seal the door of their cave over them, and leave them as they are.

(قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُواْ عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَّسْجِدًا)

(those who won their point said: "We verily, shall build a place of worship over them.") Those who said this were the people of power and influence, but were they good people or not There is some debate on this point, because the Prophet said:

«لَعَنَ اللهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِد»

(Allah has cursed the Jews and the Christians who took the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places of worship) Warning against what they did. We have reported about the Commander of the faithful `Umar bin Al-Khattab that when he found the grave of Danyal (Daniel) in Iraq during his period of rule, he gave orders that news of this grave should be withheld from the people, and that the inscription containing mention of battles etc., that they found there should be buried.

(سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَـثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْماً بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّى أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِم مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ

إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ فَلاَ تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلاَّ مِرَآءً ظَـهِرًا وَلاَ تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ أَحَداً)

(22. They say they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; and they say they were five, the dog being the sixth, guessing at the unseen; and they say they were seven, and the dog being the eighth. Say: "My Lord knows best their number; none knows them but a few." So debate not except with the clear proof. And consult not any of them (about the people of the Cave).)

Their Number

Allah tells us that people disputed over the number of the people of the Cave. The Ayah mentions three views, proving that there was no fourth suggestion. Allah indicates that the first two opinions are invalid, by saying,

(رَجْماً بِالْغَيْبِ)

(guessing at the unseen), meaning that they spoke without knowledge, like a person who aims at an unknown target -- he is hardly likely to hit it, and if he does, it was not on purpose. Then Allah mentions the third opinion, and does not comment on it, or He affirms it by saying,

(وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ)

(and the dog being the eighth.) indicating that this is correct and this is what happened.

(قُل رَّبِّى أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِم)

(Say: "My Lord knows best their number...") indicating that the best thing to do in matters like this is to refer knowledge to Allah, because there is no need to indulge in discussing such matters without knowledge. If we are given knowledge of a matter, then we may talk about it, otherwise we should refrain.

(مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ)

(none knows them but a few.) of mankind. Qatadah said that Ibn `Abbas said: "I am one of the few mentioned in this Ayah; they were seven. " Ibn Jurayj also narrated that `Ata' Al-Khurasani narrated from him, "I am one of those referred to in this Ayah," and he would say: "Their number was seven." Ibn Jarir recorded that Ibn `Abbas said:

(مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ)

(none knows them but a few.) "I am one of the few, and they were seven." The chains of these reports narrated from Ibn `Abbas, which say that they were seven, are Sahih, and this is in accordance with what we have stated above.

(فَلاَ تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلاَّ مِرَآءً ظَـهِرًا)

(So debate not except with the clear proof.) meaning, gently and politely, for there is not a great deal to be gained from knowing about that.

(وَلاَ تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ أَحَداً)

(And consult not any of them (about the people of the Cave).) meaning, `They do not have any knowledge about it except what they make up, guessing at the unseen; they have no evidence from an infallible source. But Allah has sent you, O Muhammad, with the truth in which there is no doubt or confusion, which is to be given priority over all previous books and sayings.'

(وَلاَ تَقْولَنَّ لِشَىْءٍ إِنِّى فَاعِلٌ ذلِكَ غَداً - إِلاَّ أَن يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَن يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّى لأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَـذَا رَشَدًا)

(23. And never say of anything, "I shall do such and such thing tomorrow.") (24. Except (with the saying), "If Allah wills!" And remember your Lord when you forget and say: "It may be that my Lord guides me to a nearer way of truth than this.")

Saying "If Allah wills" when determining to do Something in the Future

Here Allah, may He be glorified, shows His Messenger the correct etiquette when determining to do something in the future; this should always be referred to the will of Allah, the Knower of the Unseen, Who knows what was and what is yet to be and what is not to be, and how it will be if it is to be. It was recorded in the Two Sahihs that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ: لَأَطُوفَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى سَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: تِسْعِينَ امْرَأَةً، وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: مِائَةِ امْرَأَةٍ تَلِدُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ

مِنْهُنَّ غُلَامًا يُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ قَالَ لَهُ الْمَلَكُ: قُلْ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ، فَلَمْ يَقُلْ، فَطَافَ بِهِنَّ فَلَمْ تَلِدْ مِنْهُنَّ إِلَّا امْرَأَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ نِصْفَ إِنْسَانٍ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهصلى الله عليه وسلّم: وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَوْ قَالَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ لَمْ يَحْنَثْ، وَكَانَ دَرَكًا لِحَاجَتِه»

رِوَايَةٍ وَفِي:

«وَلَقَاتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ فُرْسَانًا أَجْمَعُون»

(Sulayman bin Dawud (peace be upon them both) said: "Tonight I will go around to seventy women)according to some reports, it was ninety or one hundred women(so that each one of them will give birth to a son who will fight for the sake of Allah." It was said to him,)according to one report, the angel said to him("Say: `If Allah wills'", but he did not say it. He went around to the women but none of them gave birth except for one who gave birth to a half-formed child.) The Messenger of Allah said, (By the One in Whose hand is my soul, had he said, "If Allah wills," he would not have broken his oath, and that would have helped him to attain what he wanted.) According to another report, (They would all have fought as horsemen in the cause of Allah.) At the beginning of this Surah we discussed the reason why this Ayah was revealed: when the Prophet was asked about the story of the people of the Cave, he said, "I will tell you tomorrow." Then the revelation was delayed for fifteen days. Since we discussed this at length at the beginning of the Surah, there is no need to repeat it here.

(وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ)

(And remember your Lord when you forget) It was said that this means, if you forget to say "If Allah wills", then say it when you remember. This was the view of Abu Al-`Aliyah and Al-Hasan Al-Basri. Hushaym reported from Al-A`mash from Mujahid that concerning a man who swears an oath, Ibn `Abbas said "He may say `If Allah wills' even if it is a year later." Ibn `Abbas used to interpret this Ayah:

(وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ)

(And remember your Lord when you forget) in this way. Al-A`mash was asked, "Did you hear this from Mujahid" He said, "Layth bin Abi Salim told it to me." The meaning of Ibn `Abbas' view, that a person may say "If Allah wills", even if it is a year later, is that if he forgets to say it when he makes the oath or when he speaks, and he remembers it later, even a year later, the Sunnah is that he should say it, so that he will still be following the Sunnah of saying "If

Allah wills", even if that is after breaking his oath. This was also the view of Ibn Jarir, but he stated that this does not make up for breaking the oath or mean that one is no longer obliged to offer expiation. What Ibn Jarir said is correct, and it is more appropriate to understand the words of Ibn Abbas in this way. And Allah knows best.

(وَلاَ تَقْولَنَّ لِشَىْءٍ إِنِّى فَاعِلٌ ذلِكَ غَداً إِلاَّ أَن يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ)

(And never say of anything, "I shall do such and such thing tomorrow." Except (with the saying), "If Allah wills!" And remember your Lord when you forget) At-Tabarani recorded that Ibn `Abbas said that this meant saying, "If Allah wills."

(وَقُلْ عَسَى أَن يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّى لأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَـذَا رَشَدًا)

(and say: "It may be that my Lord guides me to a nearer way of truth than this.") meaning, `if you (O Prophet) are asked about something you know nothing about, ask Allah about it, and turn to Him so that He may guide you to what is right.' And Allah knows best.

(وَلَبِثُواْ فِى كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلاثَ مِئَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُواْ تِسْعًا - قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُواْ لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلاَ يُشْرِكُ فِى حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا)

(25. And they stayed in their cave three hundred years, adding nine.) (26. Say: "Allah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is the unseen of the heavens and the earth." How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)! They have no protector other than Him, and He makes none to share in His decision and His rule.)

The Length of their Stay in the Cave

Here Allah tells His Messenger the length of time the people of the Cave spent in their cave, from the time when He caused them to sleep until the time when He resurrected them and caused the people of that era to find them. The length of time was three hundred plus nine years in lunar years, which is three hundred years in solar years. The difference between one hundred lunar years and one hundred solar years is three years, which is why after mentioning three hundred, Allah says, `adding nine.'

(قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُواْ)

(Say: "Allah knows best how long they stayed...") `If you are asked about how long they stayed, and you have no knowledge of that and no revelation from Allah about it, then do not say anything. Rather say something like this:

(اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُواْ لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ)

(Allah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the Unseen of the heavens and the earth.)" meaning, no one knows about that except Him, and whoever among His creatures He chooses to tell. What we have said here is the view of more than one of the scholars of Tafsir, such as Mujahid and others among the earlier and later generations.

(وَلَبِثُواْ فِى كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلاثَ مِئَةٍ سِنِينَ)

(And they stayed in their cave three hundred years,) Qatadah said, this was the view of the People of the Book, and Allah refuted it by saying:

(قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُواْ)

(Say: "Allah knows best how long they stayed...") meaning, that Allah knows better than what the people say. This was also the view of Mutarraf bin `Abdullah. However, this view is open to debate, because when the People of the Book said that they stayed in the cave for three hundred years, without the extra nine, they were referring to solar years, and if Allah was merely narrating what they had said, He would not have said,

(وَازْدَادُواْ تِسْعًا)

(adding nine.) The apparent meaning of the Ayah is that Allah is stating the facts, not narrating what was said. This is the view of Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him). And Allah knows best.

(أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ)

(How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)!) He sees them and hears them. Ibn Jarir said, "The language used is an eloquent expression of praise." The phrase may be understood to mean, how much Allah sees of everything that exists and how much He hears of everything that is to be heard, for nothing is hidden from Him! It was narrated that Qatadah commented on this Ayah:

(أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ)

(How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)!) "No one hears or sees more than Allah."

(مَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلاَ يُشْرِكُ فِى حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا)

(They have no protector other than Him, and He makes none to share in His decision and His rule.) meaning, He, may He be glorified, is the One Who has the power to create and to command, the One Whose ruling cannot be overturned; He has no adviser, supporter or partner, may He be exalted and hallowed.

(وَاتْلُ مَآ أُوْحِىَ إِلَيْكَ مِن كِتَـبِ رَبِّكَ لاَ مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَـتِهِ وَلَن تَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا - وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلاَ تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلاَ تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا)

(27. And recite what has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) of your Lord's Book. None can change His Words, and none will you find as refuge other than Him.) (28. And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follows his own lusts, and whose affair has been lost.)

The Command to recite the Qur'an and to patiently keep Company with the Believers

Commanding His Messenger to recite His Holy Book and convey it to mankind, Allah says,

(لاَ مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَـتِهِ)

(None can change His Words,) meaning, no one can alter them, distort them or misinterpret them.

(وَلَن تَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا)

(and none will you find as a refuge other than Him.) It was reported that Mujahid said, "A shelter," and that Qatadah said, "A helper or supporter." Ibn Jarir said: "Allah is saying, `if you O Muhammad, do not recite what is revealed to you of the Book of your Lord, then you will have no refuge from Allah.'" As Allah says:

(يَـأَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ)

(O Messenger! Proclaim (the Message) which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message. Allah will protect you from mankind.))5:67(

(إِنَّ الَّذِى فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْءَانَ لَرَآدُّكَ إِلَى مَعَادٍ)

(Verily, He Who has given you the Qur'an, will surely bring you back to the place of return.))28:85(meaning, `He will call you to account for the duty of conveying the Message which He entrusted you with. '

(وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ)

(And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face;) meaning, sit with those who remember Allah, who say "La Ilaha Illallah", who praise Him, glorify Him, declare His greatness and call on Him, morning and evening, all the servants of Allah, whether rich or poor, strong or weak. It was said that this was revealed about the nobles of Quraysh when they asked the Prophet to sit with them on his own, and not to bring his weak Companions with him, such as Bilal, `Ammar, Suhayb, Khabbab and Ibn Mas`ud. They wanted him to sit with them on his own, but Allah forbade him from doing that, and said,

(وَلاَ تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِىِّ)

(And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon.) Allah commanded him to patiently content himself with sitting with those people (the weak believers), and said:

(وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِىِّ)

(And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon...) Imam Muslim recorded in his Sahih that Sa`d bin Abi Waqqas who said: "There was a group of six of us with the Prophet . The idolators said, `Tell these people to leave so they will not offend us.' There was myself, Ibn Mas`ud, a man from Hudayl, Bilal and two other men whose names I have forgotten. Allah's Messenger thought to himself about whatever Allah willed he should think about, then Allah revealed:

(وَلاَ تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ)

(And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon.) Only Muslim reported this; excluding Al-Bukhari.

(وَلاَ تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا)

(and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world;) Ibn `Abbas said, `(this means) do not favor others over them, meaning do not seek the people of nobility and wealth instead of them.'

(وَلاَ تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا)

(and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance) means, those who are distracted by this world from being committed to the religion and from worshipping their Lord.

(وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا)

(and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.) means, his actions and deeds are a foolish waste of time. Do not obey him or admire his way or envy what he has. As Allah says elsewhere:

(وَلاَ تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَجاً مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى)

(And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them, the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby. But the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.))20:131(

(وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِن يَسْتَغِيثُواْ يُغَاثُواْ بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِى الْوجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا)

(29. And say: "The truth is from your Lord." Then whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, We have prepared for the wrongdoers, a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them. And if they ask for drink, they will be granted water like Al-Muhl, that will scald their faces. Terrible is the drink, and an evil Murtafaq!)

The Truth is from Allah, and the Punishment of Those Who do not believe in it

Allah says to His Messenger Muhammad : "Say to the people, `What I have brought to you from your Lord is the truth, in which there is no confusion or doubt.'"

(فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ)

(Then whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve.) This is a type of threat and stern warning, after which Allah says,

(إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا)

(Verily, We have prepared), meaning made ready,

(لِلظَّـلِمِينَ)

(for the wrongdoers,) meaning those who disbelieve in Allah, His Messenger and His Book,

(نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا)

(a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them.) Ibn Jurayj said that Ibn `Abbas said,

(أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا)

(a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them.) "A wall of fire."

(وَإِن يَسْتَغِيثُواْ يُغَاثُواْ بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِى الْوُجُوهَ)

(And if they ask for drink, they will be granted water like Al-Muhl, that will scald their faces.) Ibn ` Abbas said; "Al-Muhl is thick water which is similar to the sediment in oil." Mujahid said, "It is like blood and pus." ` Ikrimah said, "It is the thing that is heated to the ultimate temperature." Others said: "It is everything that is melted." Qatadah said, "Ibn Mas` ud melted some gold in a grove, and when it became liquid and foam rose to the top, he said, this is the thing that is most like Al-Muhl." Ad-Dahhak said: "The water of Hell is black, and it itself is black and its people are black." There is nothing contradictory in these comments, for Al-Muhl includes all of these unpleasant characteristics, it is black, evil-smelling, thick and hot, as Allah said,

(يَشْوِى الْوُجُوهَ)

()it(will scald their faces.) meaning because of its heat. When the disbeliever wants to drink it and brings it close to his face, it will scald it so that the skin of his face falls off into it. Sa` id bin Jubayr said, "When the people of Hell get hungry, they will ask for relief from it, and they will be given the tree of Zaqqum from which they will eat. The tree will tear off the skin of their faces, and if anyone who knew them were to pass by, he would recognize the skin of their faces in the tree. Then they will feel thirsty, so they will ask for drink, and they will be granted water like Al-Muhl, that is what has been heated to the ultimate temperature. When it is brought near their mouths, the flesh of their faces from which the skin has been torn off will be baked." After describing this drink in these horrifying qualities, Allah says:

(بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ)

(Terrible is the drink,) meaning, how awful this drink is. Similarly, He says in another Ayah:

(وَسُقُواْ مَآءً حَمِيماً فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَآءَهُمْ)

(and be given to drink boiling water so that it cuts up their bowels.))47:15(

(تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ ءَانِيَةٍ)

(They will be given to drink from a boiling spring.))88:5(

(وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانٍ)

(They will go between it (Hell) and the fierce boiling water.))55:44(

(وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا)

(and an evil Murtafaq!) means, how evil a place is the Fire to dwell and rest and gather. As Allah says elsewhere:

(إِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرّاً وَمُقَاماً)

(Evil indeed it (Hell) is as an abode and as a place to rest in.))25:66(

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّـلِحَاتِ إِنَّا لاَ نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلاً - أُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الأَنْهَـرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّن سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الأَرَآئِكِ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقاً)

(30. Verily, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, certainly We shall not make the reward of anyone to be lost who does his (righteous) deeds in the most perfect manner.) (31. These! For them will be Jannatu `Adn; wherein rivers flow beneath them; therein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of Sundus and Istabraq. They will be Muttaki'in therein on Ara'ik. How good is the reward, and what an excellent Murtafaq!)

The Reward of those Who believe and do Righteous Deeds

When Allah mentions the state of those who are doomed, He follows that by mentioning the blessed who believed in Allah and believed what His Messengers brought, those who did the righteous deeds that they commanded them to do. They will have Jannatu `Adn. `Adn means lasting.

(تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الأَنْهَـرُ)

(wherein rivers flow beneath them,) means, from beneath its rooms and dwellings. Fir`awn said:

(وَهَـذِهِ الاٌّنْهَـرُ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِى)

(and these rivers flowing beneath me...))43:51(

(يُحَلَّوْنَ)

(they will be adorned) means, with jewelry.

(فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ)

(with bracelets of gold,) Allah says elsewhere:

(وَلُؤْلُؤاً وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ)

(and pearls and their garments therein will be of silk))22:23(. This is explained in more detail here, where Allah says:

(وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّن سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ)

(and they will wear green garments of Sundus and Istabraq.) Sundus refers to a fine garment, like a shirt and the like, and Istabraq is thick and shiny velvet.

(مُّتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الاٌّرَائِكِ)

(They will be Muttaki'in therein on Ara'ik.) The word Muttaki'in implies lying down, or it was said that it means sitting with one's legs crossed, which is closer to the meaning here. In a Sahih Hadith, the Prophet said:

«أَمَّا أَنَا فَلَا آكُلُ مُتَّكِئًا»

(As for me, I do not eat sitting with legs crossed (Muttaki'an)). Ara'ik is the plural of Arikah, which is a bed under a canopy. And Allah knows best.

(نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقاً)

(How good is the reward, and what an excellent place of rest (Murtafaq)!) means, how blessed is Paradise as a reward for their good deeds. And what an excellent Murtafaq means, and how good a place to dwell and rest and stay. Previously, Allah had said of Hell,

(بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا)

(Terrible is the drink, and an evil place of rest (Murtafaq)!))18:29(. In a similar way, He contrasts the two (Paradise and Hell) in Surat Al-Furqan, where He says:

(إِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرّاً وَمُقَاماً)

(Evil indeed it (Hell) is as an abode, and as a place to rest in.))25:66(. Then He mentions the qualities of the believers, then says:

(أُوْلَـئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُواْ وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَـماً - خَـلِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرّاً وَمُقَاماً)

(Those will be rewarded with the highest place because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect. Abiding therein excellent it is as an abode, and as a place to rest in.))25:75-76(

(وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلاً رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَـبٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا - كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِم مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَـلَهُمَا نَهَراً - وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَـحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَاْ أَكْثَرُ مِنكَ مَالاً وَأَعَزُّ نَفَراً - وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَـذِهِ أَبَداً - وَمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدتُّ إِلَى رَبِّى لأَجِدَنَّ خَيْراً مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَباً)

(32. And put forward to them the example of two men: unto one of them We had given two gardens of grapes, and We had surrounded both with date palms; and had put between them green crops (cultivated fields).) (33. Each of those two gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein, and We caused a river to gush forth in the midst of both.) (34. And he had Thamar, and he said to his companion in the course of discussion: "I am greater than you in wealth and have a mightier entourage.") (35. And he went into his garden while having been unjust to himself. He said: "I do not think that this will ever perish.") (36. "And I do not think the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I surely, shall find better than this when I return to Him.")

The Example of the Rich Idolators and the Poor Muslims

After mentioning the idolators who were too arrogant to sit with the poor and weak among Muslims, showing off before them with their wealth and noble lineage, Allah then gives a parable for them of two men, one of whom Allah gave two gardens of grapes, surrounded with palm trees and cultivated with crops throughout. All of the trees and plants were abundantly fruitful, providing readily accessible, good quality produce. Allah says:

(كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا)

(Each of those two gardens brought forth its produce,) meaning, produced its fruits,

(وَلَمْ تَظْلِم مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا)

(and failed not in the least therein,) meaning, nothing at all was diminishing.

(وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَـلَهُمَا نَهَراً)

(and We caused a river to gush forth in the midst of both.) means, rivers were flowing through them here and there.

(وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ)

(And he had Thamar,) It was said that what was meant here was wealth, and it was said that what was meant were fruits, which is the more apparent meaning here. This is also supported by the alternative recitation, Thumr, which is the plural of Thamrah (fruit) just as Khushb is the plural of Khashab (wood). Others recite it as Thamar.

(فَقَالَ)

(and he said) the owner of the two gardens

(لِصَـحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ)

(to his companion in the course of discussion) means, while he was disputing with him and boasting to him and showing off,

(أَنَاْ أَكْثَرُ مِنكَ مَالاً وَأَعَزُّ نَفَراً)

(I am greater than you in wealth and have a mightier entourage.) meaning, `I have more servants, attendants and children.' Qatadah said, "This, by Allah, is the wish of the immoral to have a lot of wealth and a large entourage. R

(وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ)

(And he went into his garden having been unjust to himself.) meaning, in his disbelief, rebellion, arrogance and denial of the Hereafter.

(قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَـذِهِ أَبَداً)

(He said: "I do not think this will ever perish.") Thus he was allowing himself to be deceived because of the plants, fruits and trees that he saw, and the rivers flowing through the different parts of his gardens. He thought that it could never come to an end or cease or be destroyed. This was because of his lack of understanding and the weakness of his faith in Allah, and because he was enamored with this world and its adornments, and because he disbelieved in the Hereafter. So he said:

(وَمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً)

("And I do not think the Hour will ever come...") meaning, will ever happen

(وَلَئِن رُّدِدتُّ إِلَى رَبِّى لأَجِدَنَّ خَيْراً مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَباً)

(and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I surely shall find better than this when I return to Him.) meaning, `if there is a Hereafter and a return to Allah, then I will have a better share than this with my Lord, for if it were not that I am dear to Him, He would not have given me all this.' As Allah says elsewhere:

(وَلَئِن رُّجِّعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّى إِنَّ لِى عِندَهُ لَلْحُسْنَى)

(But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely there will be for me the best with Him.))41:50(

(أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِى كَفَرَ بِـَايَـتِنَا وَقَالَ لأُوتَيَنَّ مَالاً وَوَلَداً)

(Have you seen him who disbelieved in Our Ayat and said: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children)if I will be alive again).")) 19:77(He took it for granted that Allah would give him this, without any sound evidence for that. The reason why this Ayah was revea- led was because of Al-`As bin Wa'il, as we will explain in the appropriate place, if Allah wills. In Allah we put our trust.

(قَالَ لَهُ صَـحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَـوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِى خَلَقَكَ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاكَ رَجُلاً - لَّكِنَّ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّى وَلاَ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّى أَحَدًا - وَلَوْلا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ لاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَاْ أَقَلَّ مِنكَ مَالاً وَوَلَدًا - فعسَى رَبِّى أَن يُؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّن جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا - أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَن تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا)

(37. His companion said to him during his discussion: "Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust, then out of Nutfah, then fashioned you into a man") (38. "But as for my part, (I believe) that He is Allah, my Lord, and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord.") (39. "It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden: `That which Allah wills! There is no power but with Allah!' If you see me less than you in wealth, and children,") (40. "It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden, and will send on it Husban from the sky, then it will be as a barren slippery earth.") (41. "Or the water thereof becomes Ghawran so that you will never be able to seek it.")

The Response of the Poor Believer

Allah tells us how the rich man's believing companion replied to him, warning and rebuking him for his disbelief in Allah and allowing himself to be deceived.

(أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِى خَلَقَكَ مِن تُرَابٍ)

(Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust...) This is a denunciation, pointing out the seriousness of his rejection of his Lord Who created and formed man out of dust -- that is, refering to Adam -- then made his offspring from despised liquid, as Allah says:

(كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَتًا فَأَحْيَـكُمْ)

(How can you disbelieve in Allah Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life))2:28(meaning, how can you reject your Lord and His clear signs to you, which every one recognizes in himself, for there is no one among His creatures who does not know that he was nothing, then he came to be, and his existence is not due to himself or any other creature. He knows that his existence is due to his Creator, beside Whom there is no other god, the Creator of all things. So the believer said:

(لَّكِنَّ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّى)

(But as for my part, (I believe) that He is Allah, my Lord,) meaning, `I do not say what you say; rather I acknowledge the Oneness and Lordship of Allah,'

(وَلاَ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّى أَحَدًا)

(and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord.) meaning, He is Allah, the One Who is to be worshipped Alone, with no partner or associate. Then he said:

(وَلَوْلا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ لاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَاْ أَقَلَّ مِنكَ مَالاً وَوَلَدًا)

(It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden, `That which Allah wills! There is no power but with Allah!' If you see me less than you in wealth, and children.) Here he was urging and encouraging him to say that, as if he was saying, "When you entered your garden and looked at it and liked it, why would'nt you praise Allah for the blessings He gave you and the wealth and children that He has given to you and not to others Why did you not say `That which Allah wills! There is no power but with Allah!'" One of the Salaf said, "Whoever is delighted with something in his circumstances or his wealth or his children, let him say, `That which Allah wills! There is no power but with Allah!'" This is based on this Ayah. It was reported in the Sahih from Abu Musa that the Messenger of Allah said:

«أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى كَنْزٍ مِنْ كُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ؟ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِالله»

(Shall I not tell you about some of the treasure of Paradise La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah (There is no power or might but with Allah).)

(فعسَى رَبِّى أَن يُؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّن جَنَّتِكَ)

(It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden,) in the Hereafter

(وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا)

(and will send on it) on your garden in this world, which you think will never come to an end or cease to be,

(حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ)

(Husban from the sky,) Ibn `Abbas, Ad-Dahhak and Qatadah said -- and Malik narrated that Az-Zuhri said -- a punishment from heaven. The apparent meaning is that it is a mighty rain which would disrupt his garden and uproot its plants and trees. As he said:

(فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا)

(then it will be as a barren slippery earth.) meaning, smooth mud in which one cannot get a foothold. Ibn `Abbas said, "Like land without vegetation, where nothing grows."

(أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا)

(Or the water thereof becomes Ghawran) means, it disappears into the earth, which is the opposite of flowing water that seeks the surface of the earth. So Gha'ir is to go lower. as Allah says:

(قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْراً فَمَن يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِينٍ)

(Say: "Tell me! If your water were Ghawran, who then can supply you with flowing water"))67: 30(meaning, water that flows in all directions. And here Allah says:

(أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَن تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا)

(Or the water thereof (of the gardens) becomes deep-sunken (underground) so that you will never be able to seek it.) Ghawr is from the same root as Gha'ir and has a similar meaning, but is more intensive.

(وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِىَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يلَيْتَنِى لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّى أَحَدًا - وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَنصُرُونَهُ

مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِراً - هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَـيَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا)

(42. So his fruits were encircled (with ruin). And began Yuqallibu his hands over what he had spent upon it, while it was all destroyed on its trellises, and he could only say: "Would that I had ascribed no partners to my Lord!") (43. And he had no group of men to help him against Allah, nor could he defend (or save) himself.) (44. There (on the Day of Resurrection), Al-Walayah will be for Allah (Alone), the True God. He (Allah) is the best for reward and the best for the final end.)

The Evil Results of Kufr

Allah says:

(وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ)

(So his fruits were encircled), meaning his wealth, or according to the other opinion, his crops. What is meant is that what this disbeliever was afraid of and what the believer had terrified him actually had happened. A storm struck his garden, a garden which he had erroneously thought would last forever, distracting him from thoughts of Allah, may He be glorified.

(فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا)

(And he began Yuqallibu his hands over what he had spent upon it,) Qatadah said: "He was clasping his hands together in a gesture of regret and grief for the wealth he had lost."

(وَيَقُولُ يلَيْتَنِى لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّى أَحَدًاوَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ فِئَةٌ)

(and he could only say: "Would that I had ascribed no partners to my Lord!" And he had no group of men) meaning a clan or children, as he had vainly boasted,

(يَنصُرُونَهُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِراًهُنَالِكَ الْوَلَـيَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ)

(to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself. There, Al-Walayah will be for Allah, the True God.) Here there are differences in recitation. Some of the reciters pause at the word there,

(وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِراً هُنَالِكَ)

(nor could he defend himself there.), i.e., at that time, when Allah sends the punishment upon him, there will be no one to save him. Then they start the next phrase with Al-Walayah;

(الْوَلَـيَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ)

(Al-Walayah will be for Allah, the True God.) Some of them pause at the phrase

(وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِراً)

(nor could he defend himself) and start the next phrase;

(هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَـيَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ)

(There, Al-Walayah will be for Allah, the True God.) There is a further difference in the recitation of the word Al-Walayah. Some read it as Al-Walayah, which gives the meaning that all allegiance will be to Allah, i.e., on that Day everyone, believer or disbeliever, will return to Allah, for allegiance and submission to Him when the punishment comes to pass. This is like the Ayah:

(فَلَمَّا رَأَوْاْ بَأْسَنَا قَالُواْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَـفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ)

(So when they saw Our punishment, they said: "We believe in Allah Alone and reject (all) that we used to associate with Him as partners."))40:84(and Allah says concerning the Fir` awn;

(وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِى إِسْرَءِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدْوًا حَتَّى إِذَآ أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَامَنتُ أَنَّهُ لا إِلِـهَ إِلاَّ الَّذِى ءَامَنَتْ بِهِ بَنواْ إِسْرَءِيلَ وَأَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ - ءَالَنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ)

(Till when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims." Now! While you

refused to believe before and you were one of the mischief-makers.))10:90-91(Some others read it as Al-Wilayah, meaning that on that Day the rule will belong to Allah, the True God. Some read Haqqu (True) refering to Al-Wilayah, as in the Ayah;

(الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَـنِ وَكَانَ يَوْماً عَلَى الْكَـفِرِينَ عَسِيراً)

(The sovereignty on that Day will be the true (sovereignty), belonging to the Most Gracious (Allah), and it will be a hard Day for the disbelievers))25:26(. Others it read Haqqi referring to Allah, may He be glorified, as in the Ayah:

(ثُمَّ رُدُّواْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَـهُمُ الْحَقِّ)

(Then they are returned to Allah, their True Protector.))6:62(So Allah says:

(هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا)

(He (Allah) is the best to reward and the best for the final end.) for deeds that were done for the sake of Allah, their reward is good and their consequences are all good.

(وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلَ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنْزَلْنَـهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاٌّرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا - الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَـقِيَاتُ الصَّـلِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلاً)

(45. And mention the parable of the worldly life: it is like the water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But (later) it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allah is able to do everything.) (46. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for reward and better for hope.)

The Parable of the Worldly Life

Allah says:

(وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم)

(And mention) O Muhammad, to the people,

(مَثَلُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا)

(the parable of the worldly life), its transient nature and how it will eventually cease and come to an end.

(كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاٌّرْضِ)

(it is like the water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it,) It mingles with the seeds that are in the earth, so they grow and become good, producing bright, fresh flowers, then after that,

(فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا)

(it becomes dry and broken pieces,) withered up,

(تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ)

(which the winds scatter.) tossing them about right and left.

(وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا)

(And Allah is able to do everything) He has the power to do this and that. In the Qur'an Allah often gives parables like this of the life of this world, as He says in Surah Yunus,

(إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاٌّرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالاٌّنْعَـمُ)

(The parable of the worldly life is but that of water which We send down from the sky so by it arises the intermingled produce of the earth of which men and cattle eat. ..))10:24(and in Surat Az-Zumar:

(أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِى الاٌّرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً مُّخْتَلِفاً أَلْوَانُهُ)

s(See you not that Allah sends down water from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, then out from it comes crops of different colors.))39:21(and in Surat Al-Hadid:

(اعْلَمُواْ أَنَّمَا الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِى الاٌّمْوَلِ وَالاٌّوْلْـدِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ)

(Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. (It is) like the parable of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the tiller...))57:20(and in the Sahih Hadith:

«الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ»

(This world is sweet and green.)

Between Wealth and Good Deeds

(الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا)

(Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world.) This is like the Ayah:

(زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَتِ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَـطِيرِ الْمُقَنطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ)

(Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, vaulted hoards of gold...))3:14(. Allah says:

(إِنَّمَآ أَمْوَلُكُمْ وَأَوْلَـدُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas Allah! With Him is a great reward (Paradise).))64:15(turning towards Allah and worshipping Him is better for you than keeping busy with them, and accumulating wealth for them and going to extremes in feeling pity and compassion for them. Allah says:

(وَالْبَـقِيَاتُ الصَّـلِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَملاً)

(But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for reward and better for hope.) Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id bin Jubayr and others among the Salaf said that the good righteous deeds that last are the five daily prayers. `Ata' bin Abi Rabah and Sa`id bin Jubayr narrated from Ibn `Abbas, "The good righteous deeds that last are `Subhan Allah (glory be to Allah)', `Al-Hamdu Lillah (praise be to Allah)', `La ilaha illallah (there is none worthy of worship except Allah)', and `Allahu Akbar (Allah is Most Great).'" The Commander of the faithful, `Uthman bin `Affan was questioned, "Which are the good righteous deeds that last" He replied, "They are: `La ilaha illallah, Subhan Allah, Al-Hamdu Lillah, Allahu Akbar and La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah hil-`Aliyil-`Azim (there is no strength and no power except with Allah the Exalted, the Almighty).'" This was recorded by Imam Ahmad. Imam Ahmad also recorded from a freed slave of the Messenger of Allah that he said:

«بَخٍ بَخٍ لِخَمْسٍ مَا أَثْقَلَهُنَّ فِي الْمِيزَانِ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ للهِ، وَالْوَلَدُ الصَّالِحُ يُتَوَفَّى فَيَحْتَسِبُهُ وَالِدُهُ وَقَالَ: بَخٍ بَخٍ لِخَمْسٍ مَنْ لَقِيَ اللهَ مُسْتَيْقِنًا بِهِنَّ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ: يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَبِالْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ، وَبِالْبَعْثِ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَبِالْحِسَابِ»

(Well done! Well done for five things! (How heavy they will weigh in the balance! "La ilaha illallah, Allahu Akbar, Subhan Allah, and Al-Hamdu Lillah," and a righteous son who dies and his parents seek the reward of Allah.) And he said: (Well done! Well done for five things! Whoever meets Allah believing in them, he will enter Paradise; if he believes in Allah, the Last Day, Paradise and Hell, resurrection after death, and the Reckoning).

(وَالْبَـقِيَاتُ الصَّـلِحَاتُ)

(the good righteous deeds that last,) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "This is the celebration of the remembrance of Allah, saying `La ilaha illallah, Allahu Akbar, Subhan Allah, Al-Hamdu Lillah, Tabarak Allah, La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah, Astaghfirallah, Sallallahu `ala Rasul-Allah', and fasting, prayer, Hajj, Sadaqah (charity), freeing slaves, Jihad, maintaining ties of kinship, and all other good deeds. These are the righteous good deeds that last, which will remain in Paradise for those who do them for as long as heaven and earth remain." Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas: "They are good words." `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said, "They are all righteous deeds." This was also the view chosen by Ibn Jarir, may Allah have mercy on him.

(" وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الاٌّرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَـهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَداً - وَعُرِضُواْ عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفَا لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَـكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّن نَّجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَّوْعِدًا - وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَـبُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يوَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِهَـذَا الْكِتَـبِ لاَ يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلاَ كَبِيرَةً إِلاَّ أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُواْ مَا عَمِلُواْ حَاضِرًا وَلاَ يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا)

(47. And (remember) the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away, and you will see the earth as a levelled plain, and We shall gather them so that We will leave not one of them behind.) (48. And they will be set before your Lord, aligned. (He will say:) "Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time. Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you (with Us).") (49. And the Book will be produced, and you will see the criminals, fearful of that which is therein. They will say: "Woe to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a large thing, but has recorded it with numbers!" And they will find all that they did, present, and your Lord treats no one with injustice.)

The Major Terrors of the Hour

Allah tells us of the terrors of the Day of Resurrection, and the awesome things that will come to pass, as He says elsewhere:

(يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَآءُ مَوْراً - وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْراً)

(On the Day when the heaven will shake with a dreadful shaking, And the mountains pass moving away.))52:9-10(meaning, they will move from their places and will vanish. As Allah says:

(وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِىَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ)

(And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds.))27:88(

(وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنفُوشِ)

(And the mountains will be like carded wool.))101:5(

(وَيَسْـَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنسِفُهَا رَبِّى نَسْفاً - فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعاً صَفْصَفاً - لاَّ تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجاً وَلا أَمْتاً)

(And they ask you about the mountains, say: "My Lord will pulverize them scattering)their dust(. To leave them as a barren plain. You will not see in it crookness or curve.))20:105-107(Allah tells us that He will cause the mountains to vanish and be levelled, and the earth will be left as a smooth plain, a level surface with nothing crooked or curved therein, no valleys or mountains. So Allah says:

(وَتَرَى الاٌّرْضَ بَارِزَةً)

(and you will see the earth as a levelled plain,) meaning clear and open, with no features that anyone may recognize and nothing for anyone to hide behind. All creatures will be visible to their Lord, and not one of them will be hidden from Him. Mujahid and Qatadah said,

(وَتَرَى الاٌّرْضَ بَارِزَةً)

(and you will see the earth as a levelled plain,) "No one will be hidden or absent." Qatadah said, "There will be no buildings and no trees."

(وَحَشَرْنَـهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَداً)

(and we shall gather them, so that We will not leave one of them behind.) means, `We shall gather them all, the first of them and the last of them, and We shall not leave anyone behind, young or old.' As Allah says:

(قُلْ إِنَّ الاٌّوَّلِينَ وَالاٌّخِرِينَ - لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيقَـتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ)

(Say: "(yes) verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for an appointed meeting of a known Day.))56:49,50(

(ذلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ)

(That is a Day whereon mankind will be gathered together, and that is a Day when all will be present))11:103(.

(وَعُرِضُواْ عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفَا)

(And they will be set before your Lord, aligned.) This may mean that all of creation will stand before Allah in one row, as Allah says:

(يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَـئِكَةُ صَفّاً لاَّ يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَـنُ وَقَالَ صَوَاباً)

(The Day that Ar-Ruh (Jibril) and the angels will stand aligned, they will not speak except him whom the Most Gracious (Allah) allows, and he will speak what is right))78:38(; or it may mean that they will stand in rows, as Allah says:

(وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفّاً صَفّاً)

(And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.))89:22(

(لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَـكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ)

(Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time.) This is a rebuke to those who denied the Hereafter, a reprimand before all creation. This is why Allah says to them:

(بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّن نَّجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَّوْعِدًا)

(Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you (with Us).), meaning, you did not think that this would happen to you or that it would come to pass.

(وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَـبُ)

(And the Book will be produced,) the Book of deeds, which contains a record of everything, major or minor, significant or insignificant, great or small.

(فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ)

(and you will see the criminals, fearful of that which is therein.) of their evil deeds and reprehensible actions.

(وَيَقُولُونَ يوَيْلَتَنَا)

(They will say, "Woe to us!") expressing words of regret for having wasted their lives.

(مَا لِهَـذَا الْكِتَـبِ لاَ يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلاَ كَبِيرَةً إِلاَّ أَحْصَاهَا)

(What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a large thing, but has recorded it with numbers!) it has left no sin, major or minor, and no action, no matter how small, but it has recorded it with the utmost precision and accuracy.

(وَوَجَدُواْ مَا عَمِلُواْ حَاضِرًا)

(And they will find all that they did, present,) everything, both good and evil, as Allah says,

(يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا)

(On the Day when every person will be confronted with all the good he has done))3:30(. Allah says:

(يُنَبَّأُ الإِنسَـنُ يَوْمَئِذِ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ)

(On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward, and what he left behind.))75:13(And Allah says:

(يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَآئِرُ)

(The Day when all the secrets will be exposed.))86:9(meaning, everything that is hidden in people's hearts will become known. Imam Ahmad recorded from Anas that the Prophet said,

«لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لِوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُعْرَفُ بِه»

(Every traitor will have a banner on the Day of Resurrection, by which he will be known.) It was also narrated in the Two Sahihs, where one narration says,

«يُرْفَعُ لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لِوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ اسْتِهِ بِقَدْرِ غَدْرَتِهِ، يُقَالُ: هَذِهِ غَدْرَةُ فُلَانِ بْنِ فُلَان»

(On the Day of Resurrection, for every traitor a banner will be erected by his backside, and it will be said, "This is the betrayer of so-and-so the son of so-and-so.")

(وَلاَ يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا)

(and your Lord treats no one with injustice.) means, He will judge between His creatures for all of their deeds, and He will not treat any of His creatures with injustice. He will overlook and forgive and have mercy, and He will punish whomever He wills by His power, wisdom and justice. He will fill Hell with the disbelievers and those who have been disobedient. Then He will rescue the disobedient, and leave the disbelievers there for eternity. He is the Judge Who never wrongs or oppresses. Allah says:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِن تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضَـعِفْهَا)

(Surely, Allah wrongs not even of the weight of a speck of dust, but if there is any good, He doubles it.))4:40(

(وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَزِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَـمَةِ فَلاَ تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئاً)

(And We shall set up Balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything.) Until His saying;

(حَسِبِينَ)

(to take account))21:47(And there are many similar Ayat. Imam Ahmad recorded that `Abdullah bin Muhammad bin `Aqil heard Jabir bin `Abdullah say, "I was told about a Hadith which a man heard from the Prophet , so I bought a camel and put my saddle on it, then I traveled on it for a month until I came to Ash-Sham, where `Abdullah bin Unays was. I said to the doorkeeper, `Tell him that Jabir is at the door.' He said, `Jabir bin `Abdullah' I said, `Yes.' So he came out, still putting his garment on, and embraced me, and I embraced him, and said: `I heard a Hadith narrated by you, that you heard from the Messenger of Allah about reciprocal punishments. I was afraid that you or I would die before I could hear it.' He said, `I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

«يَحْشُرُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ قَالَ: الْعِبَادَ عُرَاةً غُرْلًا بُهْمًا»

(Allah will gather the people -- or His servants -- on the Day of Resurrection, naked, uncircumcised and Buhman.) I asked, `What is Buhman' He said,

لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ شَيْءٌ، ثُمَّ يُنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعُدَ كَمَا يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرُبَ: أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ وَلَهُ عِنْدَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أُقِصَّهُ مِنْهُ، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَهُ عِنْدَ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أُقِصَّهُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى اللَّطْمَةَ»

(They will have nothing with them. Then a voice will call out to them that will be heard by those far away just as easily as it will be heard by those near: "I am the Sovereign, I am the Judge. None of the people of Hell should enter Hell if he is owed something by one of the people of Paradise, until I have settled the matter, and none of the people of Paradise should enter Paradise if he is owed something by one of the people of Hell, until I settle the matter -- even if it is only the case of a slap.") We said, `How will that be, when we have come before Allah barefooted, naked, uncircumcised and having nothing with us' He said,

«بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ»

(By)merit for(good deeds, and)recompense(for evil deeds.) Shu`bah narrated from Al-`Awwam bin Muzahim from Abu `Uthman from `Uthman bin `Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنَّ الْجَمَّاءَ لَتَقْتَصُّ مِنَ الْقَرْنَاءِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(The animal who lost a horn will settle the score with the one that has horns on the Day of Resurrection.) It was recorded by `Abdullah the son of Imam Ahmad, and there are corroborating narrations through other routes.

(وَإِذَا قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَـئِكَةِ اسْجُدُواْ لأَدَمَ فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِى وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّـلِمِينَ بَدَلاً)

(50. And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves unto Adam." So they prostrated themselves, except Iblis. He was one of the Jinn; he disobeyed the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you What an evil is the exchange for the wrongdoers.)

The Story of Adam and Iblis

Allah points out to the Children of Adam the enmity of Iblis towards them and their father before them, and rebukes those who follow him and go against their Creator and Master. It is He who created them from nothing and sustains and nourishes them by His kindness, yet they still took Iblis as their friend and declared their enmity towards Allah. So Allah says:

(وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَـئِكَةِ)

(And (remember) when We said to the angels), meaning all the angels, as was mentioned in the beginning of Surat Al-Baqarah.

(اسْجُدُواْ لأَدَمَ)

(Prostrate yourselves unto Adam) a prostration of respect and honour, as Allah says:

(وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَـئِكَةِ إِنِّى خَـلِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن صَلْصَـلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ - فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِى فَقَعُواْ لَهُ سَـجِدِينَ)

(And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human (Adam) from dried (sounding) clay of altered mud. So, when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him the soul which I created for him, then fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him.))15:28-29(

(فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ)

(So they prostrated themselves except Iblis. He was one of the Jinn;) meaning, his original nature betrayed him. He had been created from smokeless fire, whereas the angels had been created from light, as is stated in Sahih Muslim where it is reported that ` A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ، وَخُلِقَ إِبْلِيسُ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ، وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُم»

(The angels were created from light, Iblis was created from smokeless fire, and Adam was created from that which has been described to you.) When matters are crucial, every vessel leaks that which it contains and is betrayed by its true nature. Iblis used to do what the angels did and resembled them in their devotion and worship, so he was included when they were addressed, but he disobeyed and went against what he was told to do. So Allah points out here that he was one of the Jinn, i.e., he was created from fire, as He says elsewhere:

(أَنَاْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ)

(I am better than he. You created me from fire, and You created him from clay.))38:76(Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "Iblis was not one of the angels, not even for a second. He was the origin of the Jinn just as Adam, upon him be peace, was the origin of mankind." This was narrated by Ibn Jarir with a Sahih chain.

(فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ)

(he disobeyed the command of his Lord.) meaning by stepping beyond the bounds of obedience to Allah. Fisq (disobeying) implies going out or stepping beyond. When the date emerges from its flower, the verb used in Arabic is Fasaqat; the same verb is used to describe a mouse coming out of its hole when it comes out to do damage. Then Allah says, rebuking those who follow and obey Iblis:

(أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِى)

(Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me) meaning, instead of Me. This is why Allah says:

(بِئْسَ لِلظَّـلِمِينَ بَدَلاً)

(What an evil is the exchange for the wrongdoers.) This is like the Ayah in Surah Ya Sin where, after mentioning the Resurrection and its terrors, and the ultimate end of the blessed and the doomed, Allah then says:

(وَامْتَازُواْ الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ)

((It will be said): "And O you the criminals! Get you apart this Day (from the believers).) until;

(أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُواْ تَعْقِلُونَ)

(Did you not then understand))36:59-62(

(مَّآ أَشْهَدتُّهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ وَلاَ خَلْقَ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُداً)

(51. They did not witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor their own creation, nor did I take those who mislead as `Adudan.)

The gods of the Idolators did not witness the Creation of anything, not even Themselves

Allah says: `These whom you take as helpers instead of Me are creatures just like you. They do not possess anything and did not witness the creation of heaven and earth, because they did not exist at that time.' Allah says, `I am the One Who independently and exclusively creates and controls all things, and I have no partner, associate or advisor in that.' As Allah says:

(قُلِ ادْعُواْ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِى السَّمَـوَتِ وَلاَ فِى الاٌّرْضِ وَمَا

لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِن شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّن ظَهِيرٍ وَلاَ تَنفَعُ الشَّفَعَةُ عِندَهُ إِلاَّ لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ)

(Say: "Call upon those you claim besides Allah, they possess not even a speck of dust in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor is there for Him any assistant among them. Intercession with Him profits not except for him whom He permits.))34:22-23(Similarly Allah says here:

(وَمَا كُنتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُداً)

(nor did I take those who mislead as `Adudan.) Malik said: "Assistants."

(وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُواْ شُرَكَآئِىَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُواْ لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّوْبِقاً - وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّواْ أَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُواْ عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا)

(52. And (remember) the Day He will say: "Call those (so-called) partners of Mine whom you claimed." Then they will cry unto them, but they will not answer them, and We shall put Mawbiq between them.) (53. And the criminals shall see the Fire and apprehend that they are to fall therein. And they will find no way of escape from it.)

Their Partners are not able to respond and the Criminals are brought to the Fire

Allah tells us how He will address the idolators on the Day of Resurrection before all of creation, rebuking and scolding them,

(نَادُواْ شُرَكَآئِىَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ)

(Call those (so-called) partners of Mine whom you claimed.) meaning, in the world. Call them today to save you from the situation you are in! Allah says:

(وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَـكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَّا خَوَّلْنَـكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَآءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَآءُ لَقَد تَّقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنكُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ)

(And truly, you have come unto Us alone as We created you the first time. You have left what you were given behind your backs and We do see not with you your intercessors whom you claimed were your partners. Now all relations between you and them have been cut off, and all that you used to claim has vanished from you.))6:94(

(فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُواْ لَهُمْ)

(Then they will cry unto them, but they will not answer them.) As Allah says:

(وَقِيلَ ادْعُواْ شُرَكَآءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُواْ لَهُمْ)

(And it will be said (to them): "Call upon those partners of yours," then they will call upon them, but they will not answer them.))28: 64(And the Ayah:

(وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُو مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَن لاَّ يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ)

(And who is more astray than one who calls others besides Allah, such as will not answer him))46:5(Until the end of the two Ayat;

(وَاتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ءالِهَةً لِّيَكُونُواْ لَهُمْ عِزّاً)

(كَلاَّ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَـدَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدّاً)

(And they have taken gods besides Allah, that they may grant them honor. Nay, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them.))19:81-82(

(وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّوْبِقاً)

(and We shall put Mawbiq between them.) Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and others said: "Destruction." The meaning is that Allah is stating that these idolators will have no way of reaching the gods they claimed in this world. He will separate them in the Hereafter and neither party will have any means of reaching the other. There will be devastation, great horrors and other terrible things in between them. `Abdullah bin `Amr understood the pronoun in the phrase "between them" to refer to the believers and the disbelievers, meaning that the people of guidance and the people of misguidance will be separated. This then is like the Ayat:

(وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَفَرَّقُونَ)

(And on the Day when the Hour will be established -- that Day shall (all men) be separated.))30:14(

(يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُونَ)

(On that Day men shall be divided.))30:43(,

(وَامْتَازُواْ الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ)

((It will be said), "And O you the criminals! Get you apart this Day (from the believers).))36:59(

(وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُواْ مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَآؤُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ)

(And on the Day when We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who joined partners, "Stop in your place! You and your partners." Then We shall separate between them...) until,

(وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ)

(And what they invented will vanish from them.))10:28-30(

(وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّواْ أَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُواْ عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا)

(And the criminals shall see the Fire and apprehend that they are to fall therein. And they will find no way of escape from it.) meaning when they see Hell with their own eyes, since it is being dragged forth by seventy thousand reins, each pulled by seventy thousand angels. When,

(وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ)

(the criminals shall see the Fire), they will realize that they cannot escape being thrown into it, and that will only intesify their anxiety and distress, because the anticipation and fear of punishment is in itself a real punishment.

(وَلَمْ يَجِدُواْ عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا)

(And they will find no way of escape from it.) means, they will have no way of fleeing, it will be inevitable.

(وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِى هَـذَا الْقُرْءَانِ لِلنَّاسِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الإِنْسَـنُ أَكْثَرَ شَىْءٍ جَدَلاً)

(54. And indeed We have given every kind of example in this Qur'an for mankind. But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.)

Examples put forth in the Qur'an

Allah says, `In this Qur'an, We have explained to mankind and given clear details of matters so that they will not stray from the truth or be misled from the path of guidance. Despite this explanation, man is very quarrelsome and opposes truth with falsehood,' except for those whom Allah guides to the path of salvation. Imam Ahmad recorded that `Ali bin Abi Talib said that the Messenger of Allah came to visit him and Fatimah, the daughter of Allah's Messenger at night, and said,

«أَلَا تُصَلِّيَانِ؟»

(Are you not going to pray) I said, "O Messenger of Allah, our souls are in the Hand of Allah. If He wills to wake us, He will wake us." When I said that, he went away without returning. Then I heard him as he was walking away, slapping his thigh and saying,

(وَكَانَ الإِنْسَـنُ أَكْثَرَ شَىْءٍ جَدَلاً)

(But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.)" It was also recorded in the Two Sahihs.

(وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَن يُؤْمِنُواْ إِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدَى وَيَسْتَغْفِرُواْ رَبَّهُمْ إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الاٌّوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلاً - وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَيُجَـدِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِالْبَـطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُواْ بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُواْ ءايَاتِى وَمَا أُنْذِرُواْ هُزُواً)

(55. And nothing prevents men from believing, while the guidance has come to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that the ways of the ancients be repeated with them, or the torment be brought to them face to face.) (56. And We send not the Messengers except as bearers of good news and warners. But those who disbelieve, argue with falsehood, in order to refute the truth thereby. And they take My Ayat and that which they are warned for jest!)

The Rebellion of the Disbelievers

Allah tells us about the rebellion of the disbelievers in ancient times and in more recent times, and how they rejected the obvious truth even when they witnessed clear signs and proofs. Nothing stopped them from following the truth except their demand to witness with their own eyes the punishment which they were being warned about. As some of them said to their Prophet:

(فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفاً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّـدِقِينَ)

(So cause a piece of the heaven to fall on us, if you are of the truthful!))26:187(, Others said:

(ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّـدِقِينَ)

(Bring Allah's torment upon us if you are one of the truthful.))29:29(The Quraysh said:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَـذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ عِندِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ أَوِ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ)

(O Allah! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring upon us a painful torment.))8:32(

(وَقَالُواْ يأَيُّهَا الَّذِى نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ - لَّوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَـئِكَةِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّـدِقِينَ)

(And they say: "O you to whom the Reminder has been sent down! Verily, you are a mad man! Why do you not bring angels to us if you are of the truthful"))15:6-7(. There are other Ayat refering to the same thing. Then Allah says:

(إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيَـهُمْ سُنَّـةُ الاٌّوَّلِينَ)

(except that the ways of the ancients be repeated with them,) meaning, their overwhelming punishment, destroying every last one of them.

(أَوْ يَأْتِيَـهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلاً)

(or the torment be brought to them face to face.) they see it with their own eyes, being directly confronted with it. Then Allah says:

(وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ)

(And We send not the Messengers except as bearers of good news and warners.) before the punishment they give good news to those who believe in them and follow them, and warnings to those who reject them and oppose them. Then Allah tells us about the disbelievers who argue:

(بِالْبَـطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُواْ بِهِ الْحَقَّ)

(with falsehood, in order to refute the truth thereby.) they try to weaken the truth that the Messengers brought, but they cannot achieve that.

(وَاتَّـخَذُواْ ءايَاتِى وَمَا أُنْذِرُواْ هُزُواً)

(And they take My Ayat and that which they are warned for jest!) they take the proof, evidence and miracles sent with the Messengers to warn them, and make them fear the punishment;

(هُزُواً)

(as a jest and mockery) and they make fun of them, which is the worst type of disbelief.

(وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِـَايـتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِىَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِى ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْراً وَإِن تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُواْ إِذاً أَبَداً - وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُم بِمَا كَسَبُواْ لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَل لَّهُم مَّوْعِدٌ لَّن يَجِدُواْ مِن دُونِهِ مَوْئِلاً)

(وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَى أَهْلَكْنَـهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُواْ وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِم مَّوْعِدًا)

(57. And who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the Ayat (signs) of his Lord, but turns away from them, forgetting what his hands have sent forth. Truly, We have set over their hearts Akinnah, lest they should understand this (the Qur'an), and in their ears, deafness. And if you call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided.) (58. And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of mercy. Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, then surely, He would have hastened their punishment. But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no escape.) (59. And these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong. And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction.)

The Worst People are Those Who turn away after being reminded

Allah says, `Who among My creatures does more wrong than one who is reminded of the signs of Allah then turns away from them,' i.e., ignores them and does not listen or pay attention to them.

(وَنَسِىَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ)

(forgetting what his hands have sent forth.) means, bad deeds and evil actions.

(إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ)

(Truly, We have set over their hearts) means, the hearts of these people,

(أَكِنَّةً)

(Akinnah) means, coverings.

(أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ)

(lest they should understand this,) means, so that they will not understand this Qur'an and its clear Message

(وَفِى ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا)

(and in their ears, deafness.) means that they will be deaf in an abstract way, to guidance.

(وَإِن تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُواْ إِذاً أَبَداً)

(And if you call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided.)

(وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ)

(And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of mercy.) means, `your Lord, O Muhammad, is forgiving and has great mercy.'

(لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُم بِمَا كَسَبُواْ لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ)

(Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, then surely, He would have hastened their punishment.) This is like the Ayah:

(وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُواْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ)

(And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving creature on the surface of the earth.))35:45(

(وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ)

(But verily, your Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind in spite of their wrongdoing. And verily, your Lord is (also) severe in punishment))13:6(. And there are many Ayat which say the same

thing. Then Allah tells us that He is patient, He conceals faults and forgives sins. He may guide some of them from wrongdoing to true guidance, and whoever continues in his evil ways, then there will come to him a Day when infants will turn grey and every pregnant female will shed her load. He says:

(بَل لَّهُم مَّوْعِدٌ لَّن يَجِدُواْ مِن دُونِهِ مَوْئِلاً)

(But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no escape.) meaning, they will find no way out.

(وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَى أَهْلَكْنَـهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُواْ)

(And these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong.) This refers to earlier nations in times past; `We destroyed them because of their stubborn disbelief.'

(وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِم مَّوْعِدًا)

(And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction.) `We appointed for them a set time limit, not to be increased or decreased. The same applies to you, O ido- lators, so beware or what happened to them will happen to you too, for you have rejected the noblest Messenger and greatest Prophet, and you are not dearer to Us than them, so fear My punishment and wrath.'

(وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَـهُ لا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِىَ حُقُباً - فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِى الْبَحْرِ سَرَباً - فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَـهُ ءَاتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِن سَفَرِنَا هَـذَا نَصَباً - قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَآ إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّى نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَآ أَنْسَانِيهُ إِلاَّ الشَّيْطَـنُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِى الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا - قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَى ءَاثَارِهِمَا

قَصَصًا - فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا)

(60. And (remember) when Musa said to his boy-servant: "I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas or a Huqub passes.") (61. But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish, and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel.) (62. So when they passed further on, Musa said to his boy-servant: "Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered Nasaban in this, our journey.") (63. He said: "Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shaytan made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange (way)!") (64.)Musa(said: "That is what we have been seeking." So they went back retracing their footsteps.) (65. Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.)

The Story of Musa and Al-Khidr

The reason for Musa's conversation with the boy-servant, Yusha` bin Nun, was that he had been told about one of the servants of Allah at the junction of the two seas, who had knowledge which Musa had not been granted, so he wanted to travel to meet him. So he said to that boy-servant of his:

(لاَ أَبْرَحُ)

(I will not give up) meaning, I will keep on traveling,

(حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ)

(until I reach the junction of the two seas) meaning, the place where the two seas met.

(أَوْ أَمْضِىَ حُقُباً)

(or a Huqub passes.) meaning, even if I have to travel for a very long time. Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Some of the scholars of the Arabic language said that Huqub means a year in the dialect of)the tribe of(Qays," then he narrated that `Abdullah bin `Amr said, "Huqub means eighty years." Mujahid said, "Seventy years." `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas said that it means a lifetime. Qatadah and Ibn Zayd said likewise.

(فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا)

(But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish,) He had been commanded to carry a salted fish with him, and it had been said to him, when you lose the fish, that will be a sign that you have reached the right place. So they set out and traveled until they reached the junction of the two seas, where there was a spring called `Ayn Al-Hayat

(the Spring of Life). They went to sleep there, and the fish felt the drops of that water, so it came back to life. It was in a vessel with Yusha`, upon him be peace, and it jumped out of the vessel towards the sea. Yusha` woke up and the fish fell into the water and started to swim through the water, leaving a track or channel behind it. Allah said:

(فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِى الْبَحْرِ سَرَباً)

(and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel.) meaning, like going through a tunnel on land. Ibn Jurayj said, "Ibn `Abbas said, `It left a trace as if it were a rock.'"

(فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا)

(So when they had passed further on,) means, past the place where they had forgotten the fish. Forgetfulness is attributed to them both even though it was actually Yusha` who forgot. This is like the Ayah:

(يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا الُّلؤْلُؤُ وَالمَرْجَانُ)

(Out of them both come out pearl and coral.))55:22(, although they come from the salt water, according to one of the two opinions. When they had passed one stage beyond the place where they had forgotten the fish,

(قَالَ لِفَتَـهُ ءَاتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِن سَفَرِنَا هَـذَا)

()Musa(said to his boy-servant: "Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered in this, our journey) meaning, their journey beyond the place where they should have stopped.

(نَصَباً)

(Nasaban) means, exhaustion.

(قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَآ إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّى نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَآ أَنْسَانِيهُ إِلاَّ الشَّيْطَـنُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ)

(He said: "Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shaytan made me forget to remember it...") Then he said,

(وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ)

(It took its course), meaning its path,

(فِى الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًاقَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ)

("...into the sea in a strange (way)!")Musa(said: "That is what we have been seeking.") meaning, this is what we have been looking for.

(فَارْتَدَّا)

(So they went back)

(عَلَى ءَاثَارِهِمَا)

(their footsteps.)

(فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا)

(Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.) This was Al-Khidr, peace be upon him, as is indicated by the authentic Hadiths narrated from the Messenger of Allah . Al-Bukhari recorded that Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "I said to Ibn `Abbas: `Nawf Al-Bikali claims that Musa, the companion of Al-Khidr was not the Musa of the Children of Israel.' Ibn `Abbas said, `The enemy of Allah has told a lie.' Ubayy bin Ka`b narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«إِنَّ مُوسَى قَامَ خَطِيبًا فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فَسُئِلَ: أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَعْلَمُ؟ قَالَ: أَنَا، فَعَتَبَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ إِذْ لَمْ يَرُدَّ الْعِلْمَ إِلَيْهِ، فَأَوْحَى اللهُ إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ لِي عَبْدًا بِمَجْمَعِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مِنْكَ. قَالَ مُوسَى: يَا رَبِّ وَكَيْفَ لِي بِهِ؟ قَالَ: تَأْخُذُ مَعَكَ حُوتًا فَتَجْعَلَهُ بِمِكْتَلٍ، فَحَيْثُمَا فَقَدْتَ الْحُوتَ فَهُوَ ثَمَّ، فَأَخَذَ حُوتًا فَجَعَلَهُ بِمِكْتَلٍ، ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ وَانْطَلَقَ مَعَهُ فَتَاهُ يُوشَعُ بْنُ نُونٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَيَا الصَّخْرَةَ

وَضَعَا رُءُوسَهُمَا فَنَامَا، وَاضْطَرَبَ الْحُوتُ فِي الْمِكْتَلِ، فَخَرَجَ مِنْهُ فَسَقَطَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا، وَأَمْسَكَ اللهُ عَنِ الْحُوتِ جِرْيَةَ الْمَاءِ، فَصَارَ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلَ الطَّاقِ، فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْقَظَ، نَسِيَ صَاحِبُهُ أَنْ يُخْبِرَهُ بِالْحُوتِ، فَانْطَلَقَا بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِمَا وَلَيْلَتَهُمَا حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ مِنَ الْغَدِ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ:

(ءَاتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِن سَفَرِنَا هَـذَا نَصَباً)

(Musa got up to deliver a speech before the Children of Israel and he was asked, "Who is the most learned person among the people" Musa replied, "I am." Allah rebuked him because he did not refer the knowledge to Allah. So Allah revealed to him: "At the junction of the two seas there is a servant of Ours who is more learned than you." Musa asked, "O my Lord, how can I meet him" Allah said, "Take a fish and put it in a vessel and then set out, and where you lose the fish, you will find him." So Musa took a fish, put it in a vessel and set out, along with his boy-servant Yusha` bin Nun, peace be upon him, till they reached a rock (on which) they both lay down their heads and slept. The fish moved vigorously in the vessel and got out of it and fell into the sea and there it took its way through the sea (straight) as in a tunnel. Allah stopped the flow of water on both sides of the way created by the fish, and so that way was like a tunnel. When Musa got up, his companion forgot to tell him about the fish, and so they carried on their journey during the rest of the day and the whole night. The next morning Musa said to his boy-servant, ("Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered much fatigue in this, our journey.") وَلَمْ يَجِدْ مُوسَى النَّصَبَ حَتَّى جَاوَزَ الْمَكَانَ الَّذِي أَمَرَهُ اللهُ بِهِ، قَالَ لَهُ فَتَاهُ:

(أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَآ إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّى نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَآ أَنْسَانِيهُ إِلاَّ الشَّيْطَـنُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِى الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا)

قَالَ: فَكَانَ لِلْحُوتِ سَرَبًا، وَلِمُوسَى وَفَتَاهُ عَجَبًا، فَقَالَ:

(ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَى ءَاثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا)

فَقَالَ.السَّلَامُ بِأَرْضِكَ وَأَنَّى :الْخَضِرُ فَقَالَ موسَى عَلَيْهِ فَسَلَّمَ بِثَوْبٍ، مُسَجًّى رَجُلٌ فَإِذَا الصَّخْرَةِ، إِلَى انْتَهَيَا حَتَّى أَثَرَهُمَا يَقُصَّانِ فَرَجَعَا :قَالَ: رُشْدًا عُلِّمْتَ مِمَّا لِتُعَلِّمَنِي أَتَيْتُكَ :قَالَ نَعَمْ، :قَالَ إِسْرَائِيلَ؟ بَنِي مُوسَى :فَقَالَ .مُوسَى أَنَا

(قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً)

أَعْلَمُهُ لَا اللهُ عَلَّمَكَهُ للهِ عِلْمٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ عَلَى وَأَنْتَ أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُهُ لَا عَلَّمَنِيهِ اللهِ عِلْمِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ عَلَى إِنِّي مُوسَى يَا. Musa did not get tired till he had passed the place that Allah had ordered him to look for. His boy-servant then said to him, ("Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shaytan made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange way.") There was a tunnel for the fish and Musa and his boy-servant were amazed. Musa said, ("That is what we have been seeking." So they went back retracing their footsteps.") So they went back retracing their steps until they reached the rock. There they found a man covered with a garment. Musa greeted him. Al-Khidr said, "Is there such a greeting in your land" Musa said, "I am Musa." He said, "Are you the Musa of the Children of Israel" Musa said, "Yes," and added, "I have come to you so that you may teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught." Al-Khidr said, ("You will not be able to have patience with me.) O Musa! I have some of Allah's knowledge which He has bestowed upon me but you do not know it; and you too, have some of Allah's knowledge which He has bestowed upon you, but I do not know it." مُوسَى فَقَالَ:

(سَتَجِدُنِى إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلاَ أَعْصِى لَكَ أمْراً)

خَضِرُالْ لَهُ قَالَ:

(فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِى فَلاَ تَسْأَلْنى عَن شَىءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْراً)

إِلَّا يَفْجَأْ لَمْ السَّفِينَةِ فِي رَكِبَا لَمَّافَ نَوْلٍ، بِغَيْرِ فَحَمَلُوهُمْ الْخَضِرَ فَعَرَفُوا يَحْمِلُوهُمْ، أَنْ فَكَلَّمُوهُمْ سَفِينَةٌ، فَمَرَّتْ الْبَحْرِ سَاحِلِ عَلَى يَمْشِيَانِ فَانْطَلَقَا جِئْتَ لَقَدْ أَهْلَهَا؟ لِتُغْرِقَ فَخَرَقْتَهَا سَفِينَتِهِمْ إِلَى فَعَمَدْتَ نَوْلٍ، بِغَيْرِ حَمَلُونَا قَدْ :مُوسَى لَهُ فَقَالَ بِالْقَدُّومِ، السَّفِينَةِ أَلْوَاحِ مِنْ لَوْحًا قَلَعَ قَدْ وَالْخَضِرُ إِمْرًا شَيْئًا

(قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً - قَالَ لاَ تُؤَاخِذْنِى بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلاَ تُرْهِقْنِى مِنْ أَمْرِى عُسْراً)

Musa said, ("If Allah wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in aught.") Al-Khidr said to him, ("Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention it to you.") So they set out walking along the shore, until a boat passed by and they asked the crew to let them go on board. The crew recognized Al-Khidr and allowed them to go on board free of charge. When they went on board, suddenly Musa saw that Al-Khidr had pulled out one of the planks of the ship with an adz. Musa said to him, "These people gave us a free ride, yet

you have broken their boat so that its people will drown! Verily, you have done a terrible thing! ("Al-Khidr said, "Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me") (Musa said, "Call me not to account for what I forgot and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you). ")) The Messenger of Allah said, فَنَقَرَ السَّفِينَةِ، حَرْفِ عَلَى فَوَقَعَ عُصْفُورٌ وَجَاءَ :قَالَ نِسْيَانًا، مُوسَى مِنْ الْأُولَى فَكَانَتِ السَّفِينَةِ مِنَ خَرَجَا ثُمَّ الْبَحْرِ هَذَا مِنْ الْعُصْفُورُ هَذَا نَقَصَ مَا مِثْلُ إِلَّا اللهِ عِلْمِ فِي وَعِلْمُكَ عِلْمِي مَا :الْخَضِرُ لَهُ فَقَالَ نَقْرَتَيْنِ أَوْ نَقْرَةً الْبَحْرِ فِي مُوسَى لَهُ فَقَالَ فَقَتَلَهُ، بِيَدِهِ فَاقْتَلَعَهُ رَأْسَهُ الْخَضِرُ فَأَخَذَ الْغِلْمَانِ، مَعَ يَلْعَبُ غُلَامًا الْخَضِرُ أَبْصَرَ إِذْ السَّاحِلِ عَلَى يَمْشِيَانِ هُمَا فَبَيْنَمَا:

(فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلاَمًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً نُّكْراً - قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً)

(In the first instance, Musa asked Al-Khidr because he had forgotten his promise. Then a bird came and sat on the edge of the boat, dipping its beak once or twice in the sea. Al-Khidr said to Musa, "My knowledge and your knowledge, in comparison to Allah's knowledge, is like what this bird has taken out of the sea." Then they both disembarked from the boat, and while they were walking on the shore, Al-Khidr saw a boy playing with other boys. Al-Khidr took hold of the boy's head and pulled it off with his hands, killing him. Musa said to him, ("Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none! Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!" He said, "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to have patience with me") قَالَ: وَهَذِهِ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْأُولَى/

(قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَىْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلاَ تُصَاحِبْنِى قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّى عُذْراً فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْاْ أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَاراً يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ)

بِيَدِهِ الْخَضِرُ َلاقَفَ،مَائِلًا أَيْ

(فَأَقَامَهُ)

يُضَيِّفُونَا وَلَمْ يُطْعِمُونَا فَلَمْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ قَوْمٌ :مُوسَى فَقَالَ

(فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْاْ أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَاراً يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لاَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً -

قَالَ هَـذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِى وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

)The narrator(said, "The second blame was stronger than the first one". (Musa said, "If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company; you have received an excuse from me." Then they both proceeded until they came to the people of a town. They asked them for food but they refused to entertain them. (Then) they found there a wall on the point of falling down.) (Al-Khidr) set it up straight with his own hands. Musa said, "We came to these people, but they neither fed us nor received us as guests. (If you had wished, surely, you could have taken wages for it!" (Al-Khidr) said: "This is the parting between you and I. I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were unable to be patient.") The Messenger of Allah said:

«وَدِدْنَا أَنَّ مُوسَى كَانَ صَبَرَ حَتَّى يَقُصَّ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ خَبَرِهِمَا»

(We wish that Musa was patient so that Allah would have told us more about both of them.) Sa`id bin Jubayr said: "Ibn `Abbas used to recite)Ayah no. 79((وَكَانَ أَمَامَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ صَالِحَةٍ غَصْبًا) (There was a king before them who seized every good-conditioned ship by force) and)Ayah no 80((وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ كَافِرًا وَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ) (As for the boy, he was a disbeliever and his parents were believers.) Then (in another narration) Al-Bukhari recorded a similar account which says: فَخَرَجَ مُوسَى وَمَعَهُ فَتَاهُ يُوشَعُ بْنُ نُونٍ وَمَعَهُمَا الْحُوتُ، حَتَّى انْتَهَيَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ، فَنَزَلَا عِنْدَهَا، قَالَ: فَوَضَعَ مُوسَى رَأْسَهُ فَنَامَ، قَالَ: وَفِي أَصْلِ الصَّخْرَةِ عَيْنٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا الْحَيَاةُ لَا يُصِيبُ مِنْ مَائِهَا شَيْءٌ إِلَّا حَيِيَ فَأَصَابَ الْحُوتَ مِنْ مَاءِ تِلْكَ الْعَيْنِ، فَتَحَرَّكَ وَانْسَلَّ مِنَ الْمِكْتَلِ، فَدَخَلَ الْبَحْرَ، فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْقَظَ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ:

(ءَاتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا)

(...then Musa set out and with him was his boy-servant Yusha` bin Nun, and they had the fish with them. When they reached the rock, they camped there, and Musa lay down his head and slept. At the base of the rock there was a spring called Al-Hayat; its water never touched a thing but it brought it to life. Some of its water touched the fish, so it began to move and jumped out of the vessel and into the sea. When he woke up, Musa said to his boy-servant: (Bring us our morning meal.)) Then he quoted the rest of the Hadith. Then a bird came and perched on the edge of the ship, and dipped its beak in the sea, and Al-Khidr said to Musa, "My knowledge and your knowledge and the knowledge of all of creation, in comparison to the knowledge of Allah, is like what this bird has taken from the sea." Then he mentioned the rest of the report.

(قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَن تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْداً - قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً - وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْراً)

(قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِى إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلاَ أَعْصِى لَكَ أمْراً - قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِى فَلاَ تَسْأَلْنى عَن شَىءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْراً)

(66. Musa said to him: "May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught (by Allah)") (67. He said: "Verily, you will not be able to have patience with me!") (68. "And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not") (69. Musa said: "If Allah wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in aught.") (70. He said: "Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention of it to you.")

Musa meeting with Al-Khidr and accompanying Him

Allah tells us what Musa said to that learned man, who was Al-Khidr. He was one to whom Allah had given knowledge that He had not given to Musa, just as He had given Musa knowledge that He had not given to Al-Khidr.

(قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ)

(Musa said to him: "May I follow you...") This is a question phrased in gentle terms, with no sense of force or coercion. This is the manner in which the seeker of knowledge should address the scholar.

(اتَّبَعَكَ)

(I follow you) means, I accompany you and spend time with you.

(عَلَى أَن تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْداً)

(so that you teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught) meaning, teach me something from that which Allah has taught you so that I may be guided by it and learn something beneficial and do righteous deeds. At this point,

(قَالَ)

(He said) meaning, Al-Khidr said to Musa,

(إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً)

(Verily, you will not be able to have patience with me!) meaning, `You will not be able to accompany with me when you see me doing things that go against your law, because I have knowledge from Allah that He has not taught you, and you have knowledge from Allah that He has not taught me. Each of us has responsibilities before Allah that the other does not share, and you will not be able to stay with me,'

(وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْراً)

(And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not) `For I know that you will denounce me justifiably, but I have knowledge of Allah's wisdom and the hidden interests which I can see but you cannot.'

(قَالَ)

(He said) meaning, Musa said:

(سَتَجِدُنِى إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا)

(If Allah wills, you will find me patient,) with whatever I see of your affairs,

(وَلاَ أَعْصِى لَكَ أمْراً)

(and I will not disobey you in aught.) means, `I will not go against you in anything.' At that point, Al-Khidr, upon him be peace, set a condition:

(قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِى فَلاَ تَسْأَلْنى عَن شَىءٍ)

(Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything) do not initiate any discussion of the matter,

(حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْراً)

(till I myself mention of it to you.) meaning, `until I initiate the discussion, before you ask me about it.'

(فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا رَكِبَا فِى السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا - قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً - قَالَ لاَ تُؤَاخِذْنِى بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلاَ تُرْهِقْنِى مِنْ أَمْرِى عُسْراً)

(71. So they both proceeded, till, when they boarded the boat, he (Khidr) damaged it. Musa said: "Have you damaged it wherein its people will drown Verily, you have committed a thing Imr.") (72. He said: "Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me") (73. He said: "Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).")

Damaging the Boat

Allah tells us that Musa and his companion Al-Khidr set out having come to an agreement and reached an understanding. Al-Khidr had made the condition that Musa should not ask him about anything he found distasteful until he himself initiated the discussion and offered an explanation. So they went on board the ship, as described in the Hadith quoted above -- the crew recognized Al-Khidr and let them ride on board free of charge, as an honor to Al-Khidr. When the boat took them out to sea and they were far from the shore, Al-Khidr got up and damaged the boat, pulling out one of its planks and then patching it up again. Musa, peace be upon him, could not restrain himself from denouncing him, so he said:

(أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا)

(Have you damaged it wherein its people will drown) The grammatical structure of the sentence in Arabic implies that this was the consequence, not the purpose, of his action.

(لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا)

(Verily, you have committed a thing Imr.) About `Imr', Mujahid said: "An evil thing." Qatadah said, "An astounding thing." At this point, reminding him of the previously-agreed condition, Al-Khidr said:

(أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً)

(Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me) meaning, `this thing that I did deliberately is one of the things I told you not to denounce me for, because you do not know the full story, and there is a reason and purpose for it that you do not know about.'

(قَالَ)

(He said), meaning, Musa said:

(لاَ تُؤَاخِذْنِى بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلاَ تُرْهِقْنِى مِنْ أَمْرِى عُسْراً)

(Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).) meaning, `do not be harsh with me.' Hence it says in the Hadith quoted above from the Messenger of Allah :

«كَانَتِ الْأُولَى مِنْ مُوسَى نِسْيَانًا»

(In the first instance, Musa asked Al-Khidr because he had forgotten his promise.)

(فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلاَمًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً نُّكْراً - قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً - قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَىْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلاَ تُصَاحِبْنِى قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّى عُذْراً)

(74. Then they both proceeded till they met a boy, and he (Khidr) killed him. Musa said: "Have you killed an innocent person without Nafs Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!") (75. He said: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me") (76. He said: "If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me.")

The Story of killing the Boy

(فَانطَلَقَا)

(Then they both proceeded,) means, after the first incident,

(حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلاَمًا فَقَتَلَهُ)

(till they met a boy, and he (Khidr) killed him.) It has been stated previously that this boy was playing with other boys in one of the towns, and that Al-Khidr deliberately singled him out. He was the finest and most handsome of them all, and Al-Khidr killed him. When Musa, peace be upon him, saw that he denounced him even more fervently than in the first case, and said hastily:

(أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً)

(Have you killed an innocent person) meaning, a young person who had not yet committed any sin or done anything wrong, yet you killed him

(بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ)

(without Nafs) with no reason for killing him.

(لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً نُّكْراً)

(Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!) meaning, something that is clearly evil.

(قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِىَ صَبْراً)

(He said: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me") Once again, Al-Khidr reiterates the condition set in the first place, so Musa says to him:

(إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَىْءٍ بَعْدَهَا)

(If I ask you anything after this,) meaning, `if I object to anything else you do after this,'

(فَلاَ تُصَاحِبْنِى قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّى عُذْراً)

(keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me.) `you have accepted my apology twice.' Ibn Jarir narrated from Ibn `Abbas that Ubayy bin Ka`b said: "Whenever the Prophet mentioned anyone, he would pray for himself first. One day he said:

«رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى مُوسَى لَوْ لَبِثَ مَعَ صَاحِبِهِ لَأَبْصَرَ الْعَجَبَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ قَالَ:

(إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَىْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلاَ تُصَاحِبْنِى قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّى عُذْراً)»

(May the mercy of Allah be upon us and upon Musa. If he had stayed with his companion he would have seen wonders, but he said, (`If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me.'))"

(فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْاْ أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَاراً يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لاَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً - قَالَ هَـذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِى وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

(77. Then they both proceeded till when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them. Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he set it up straight. (Musa) said: "If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it!") (78. He said: "This is the parting between you and I, I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were not able to be patient.")

The Story of repairing the Wall Allah tells us that

(فَانطَلَقَا)

(they both proceeded) after the first two instances,

(حَتَّى إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ)

(till when they came to the people of a town,) Ibn Jarir narrated from Ibn Sirin that this was Al-Aylah. According to the Hadith;

«حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ لِئَامًا»

(When they came there, the people of the town were mean.) i.e., miserly

(اسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْاْ أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَاراً يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ)

(they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them. Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he (Khidr) set it up straight.) means, he fixed it so it was standing upright properly. We have already seen in the Hadith quoted above that he set it up with his own hands, supporting it until it was standing straight again, which is something extraordinary. At this point Musa said to him:

(لَوْ شِئْتَ لاَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً)

(If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it!) meaning, because they did not entertain us as guests, you should not have worked for them for free.

(قَالَ هَـذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِى وَبَيْنِكَ)

(He said: "This is the parting between you and I) meaning, because you said after the boy was killed that if you asked me anything after that, you would not accompany me any further. So this is the parting of the ways between me and you.

(سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ)

(I will tell you the interpretation) meaning explanation,

(مَا لَمْ تَسْطِـع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

(of (those) things over which you were not able to be patient.)

(أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَـكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِى الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدتُّ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُم مَّلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْباً)

(79. "As for the boat, it belonged to poor people working in the sea. So I wished to make a defective damage in it, as there was a king behind them who seized every boat by force.")

Interpretations of why the Ship was damaged

This is an explanation of what Musa found so hard to understand, and the appearence of which he condemed. Allah showed Al-Khidr the hidden reasons, so he said, "I damaged the ship to make it faulty, because they used to pass by a king who was one of the oppressors, who

(يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ)

(seized every boat), i.e., every good, sound boat

(غَصْباً)

(by force.) `So I wanted to prevent him from taking this boat by making it appear faulty, so that its poor owners who had nothing else could benefit from it.' It was also said that they were orphans.

(وَأَمَّا الْغُلَـمُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَآ أَن يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَـناً وَكُفْراً - فَأَرَدْنَآ أَن يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْراً مِّنْهُ زَكَـوةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْماً)

(80. "And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief.") (81. "So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness and nearer to mercy.")

Interpretation of why the Boy was killed

Ibn `Abbas narrated from Ubayy bin Ka`b that the Prophet said:

«الْغُلَامُ الَّذِي قَتَلَهُ الْخَضِرُ طُبِعَ يَوْمَ طُبِعَ كَافِرًا»

(The boy Al-Khidr killed was destined to be a disbeliever from the day he was created.) It was recorded by Ibn Jarir from Ibn `Abbas. He said:

(فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَآ أَن يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَـناً وَكُفْراً)

(his parents were believers, and we feared he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief) Their love for him might make them follow him in disbelief. Qatadah said, "His parents rejoiced when he was born and grieved for him when he was killed. If he had stayed alive, he would have been the cause of their doom. So let a man be content with the decree of Allah, for the decree of Allah for the believer, if he dislikes it, is better for him than if He were to decree something that he likes for him." An authentic Hadith says;

«لَا يَقْضِي اللهُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ قَضَاءٍ إِلَّا كَانَ خَيْرًا لَه»

(Allah does not decree anything for the believer except it is good for him.) And Allah says:

(وَعَسَى أَن تَكْرَهُواْ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ)

(and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you.))2:216(.

(فَأَرَدْنَآ أَن يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْراً مِّنْهُ زَكَوةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْماً)

(So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness and nearer to mercy.) A child who was better than this one, a child for whom they would feel more compassion. This was the view of Ibn Jurayj.

(وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَـمَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِى الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَـلِحاً فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِى ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِـع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

(82. "And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and your Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. And I did them not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not be patient.)

Interpretation of why the Wall was repaired for no Charge

In this Ayah there is a proof that the word Qaryah (village) may be used to refer to a city (Madinah), because Allah first says,

(حَتَّى إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ)

(till when they came to the people of a town (Qaryah)))18:77(, but here He says:

(فَكَانَ لِغُلَـمَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِى الْمَدِينَةِ)

(it belonged to two orphan boys in the town (Al-Madinah);) This is like the Ayat:

(وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ هِىَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّن قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِى أَخْرَجَتْكَ)

(And many a town (Qaryah), stronger than your town which has driven you out We have destroyed))47:13(and;

(وَقَالُواْ لَوْلاَ نُزِّلَ هَـذَا الْقُرْءَانُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ)

(And they say: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man of the two towns (Al-Qaryatayn)"))43:31(meaning Makkah and At-Ta'if. The meaning of the Ayah)18:82(is: "I repaired this wall because it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and underneath it was some treasure belonging to them." `Ikrimah, Qatadah and others said, "Underneath it there was some wealth that was buried for them." This meaning is apparent from the context of the Ayah, and is the view chosen by Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him).

(وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَـلِحاً)

(their father was a righteous man,) indicates that a righteous person's offspring will be taken care of, and that the blessing of his worship will extend to them in this world and in the Hereafter. This will occur through his intercession for them, as well as their status being raised to the highest levels of Paradise, so that he may find joy in them. This was stated in the Qur'an and reported in the Sunnah. Sa`id bin Jubayr narrated from Ibn `Abbas: "They were taken care of because their father was a righteous man, although it is not stated that they themselves were righteous."

(فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا)

(your Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure) Here will is attributed to Allah, the Exalted, because no one else is able to bring them to the age of full strength and puberty except Allah. In contrast, He said about the boy:

(فَأَرَدْنَآ أَن يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْراً مِّنْهُ زَكَوةً)

(So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness) and concerning the ship:

(فَأَرَدتُّ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا)

(So I wished to make a defective damage in it,) And Allah knows best.

Was Al-Khidr a Prophet

(رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِى)

(as a mercy from your Lord. And I did them not of my own accord.) Meaning, `These three things that I did, come from the mercy of Allah for those we have mentioned, the crew of the ship, the parents of the boy and the two sons of the righteous man; I was only commanded to do these things that were enjoined upon me.' This is proof and evidence in support of those who say that Al-Khidr, peace be upon him, was a Prophet, along with the Ayah which we have already quoted:

(فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَآ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا)

(Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.))18:65(

Why he was called Al-Khidr

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet said concerning Al-Khidr:

«إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ خَضِرًا لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى فَرْوَةٍ بَيْضَاءَ، فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَزُّ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ خَضْرَاء»

(He was called Al-Khidr because he sat on a barren Farwah that turned white, then it turned green (Khadra') beneath him.) Imam Ahmad also recorded this from `Abdur-Razzaq. It was also

recorded in Sahih Al-Bukhari from Hammam from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

«إِنَّمَا سُمِّي الْخَضِرَ لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى فَرْوَةٍ، فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَزُّ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ خَضْرَاء»

(He was called Al-Khidr because he sat on a barren Farwah and it turned green (Khadra') beneath him.) The meaning of Farwah here is a patch of withered vegetation. This was the view of `Abdur-Razzaq. It was also said that it means the face of the earth.

(ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِـع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

(That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not be patient.) meaning, `this is the explanation of the things which you could not put up with or be patient with until I took the initiative of explaining them to you.' When he explained them and made them clear and solved the confusion, he used a milder form of the verb,

(تَسْطِـع)

(you could) When the matter was still confusing and very difficult, a more intensive form was used,

(سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْراً)

(I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were unable to be patient with))18:78(. The intensity of the verbal form used reflects the intensity of the confusion felt. This is like the Ayah:

(فَمَا اسْطَـعُواْ أَن يَظْهَرُوهُ)

(So they (Ya`juj and Ma`juj) were not able to scale it))18:97(which means ascending to its highest point,

(وَمَا اسْتَطَـعُواْ لَهُ نَقْبًا)

(nor are they able to dig through it))18:97(which is more difficult than the former. The intensity of the verbal form used reflects the difficulty of the action, which has to do with the subtleties of meaning. And Allah knows best. If one were to ask, what happened to the boy-servant of Musa who appears at the beginning of the story but then is not mentioned The answer is that the objective of the story is what happened between Musa and Al-Khidr. Musa's boy-servant was with him, following him. It is clearly mentioned in the Sahih Hadiths referred to above that he was Yusha` bin Nun, who was the one who became the leader of the Children of Israel after Musa, peace be upon him.

(وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَن ذِى الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُواْ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْهُ ذِكْراً - إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِى الاٌّرْضِ وَآتَيْنَـهُ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَباً)

(83. And they ask you about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say: "I shall recite to you something of his story.") (84. Verily, We established him in the earth, and We gave him the means of everything.)

The Story of Dhul-Qarnayn Allah says to His Prophet ,

(وَيَسْـَلُونَكَ)

(And they ask you) O Muhammad ,

(عَن ذِى الْقَرْنَيْنِ)

(about Dhul-Qarnayn.) i.e., about his story. We have already mentioned how the disbelievers of Makkah sent word to the People of the Book and asked them for some information with which they could test the Prophet . They (the People of the Book) said, `Ask him about a man who traveled extensively throughout the earth, and about some young men who nobody knows what they did, and about the Ruh (the soul),' then Surat Al-Kahf was revealed. Dhul-Qarnayn had great Power

(إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِى الاٌّرْضِ)

(Verily, We established him in the earth,) means, `We have given him great power, so that he had all that kings could have of might, armies, war equipment and siege machinery.' So he had dominion over the east and the west, all countries and their kings submitted to him, and all the nations, Arab and non-Arab, served him. Some of them said he was called Dhul-Qarnayn (the one with two horns) because he reached the two "Horns" of the sun, east and west, where it rises and where it sets.

(وَآتَيْنَـهُ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَباً)

(and We gave him the means of everything.) Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr, `Ikrimah, As-Suddi, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak and others said, "This means knowledge." Qatadah also said,

(وَآتَيْنَـهُ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَباً)

(and We gave him the means of everything.) "The different parts and features of the earth." Concerning Bilqis, Allah said,

(وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ)

(she has been given all things))27:23(, meaning all things that monarchs like her are given. Thus too was Dhul-Qarnayn: Allah gave him the means of all things, meaning the means and power to conquer all areas, regions and countries, to defeat enemies, suppress the kings of the earth and humiliate the people of Shirk. He was given all that a man like him would need. And Allah knows best.

(فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَباً - حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِى عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِندَهَا قَوْماً قُلْنَا يذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّآ أَن تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّآ أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْناً - قَالَ أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَى رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَاباً نُّكْراً - وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَـلِحاً فَلَهُ جَزَآءً الْحُسْنَى وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْراً)

(85. So he followed a way.) (86. Until, when he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a spring of Hami'ah. And he found near it a people. We said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Either you punish them or treat them with kindness.") (87. He said: "As for him who does wrong, we shall punish him, and then he will be brought back unto his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible torment (Hell).") (88. "But as for him who believes and works righteousness, he shall have the best reward, and we shall speak unto him mild words.")

His traveling and reaching the Place where the Sun sets (the West)

(فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَباً)

(So he followed a way.) Ibn `Abbas said that he followed different routes to achieve what he wanted.

(فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَباً)

(So he followed a way.) Mujahid said that he followed different routes, east and west. According to one report narrated from Mujahid, he said:

(سَبَباً)

(a way) means, "A route through the land." Qatadah said, "It means he followed the routes and landmarks of the earth."

(حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ)

(Until, when he reached the setting place of the sun,) means, he followed a route until he reached the furthest point that could be reached in the direction of the sun's setting, which is the west of the earth. As for the idea of his reaching the place in the sky where the sun sets, this is something impossible, and the tales told by storytellers that he traveled so far to the west that the sun set behind him are not true at all. Most of these stories come from the myths of the People of the Book and the fabrications and lies of their heretics.

(وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِى عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ)

(he found it setting in a spring of Hami'ah) meaning, he saw the sun as if it were setting in the ocean. This is something which everyone who goes to the coast can see: it looks as if the sun is setting into the sea but in fact it never leaves its path in which it is fixed. Hami'ah is, according to one of the two views, derived from the word Hama'ah, which means mud. This is like the Ayah:

(إِنِّى خَـلِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن صَلْصَـلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ)

("I am going to create a man (Adam) from dried clay of altered Hama'h (mud)))15:28(, which means smooth mud, as we have discussed above.

(وَوَجَدَ عِندَهَا قَوْماً)

(And he found near it a people.) meaning a nation. They mentioned that they were a great nation from among the sons of Adam.

(قُلْنَا يذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّآ أَن تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّآ أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْناً)

(We (Allah) said (by inspiration): "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Either you punish them or treat them with kindness") means, Allah gave him power over them and gave him the choice: if he wanted to, he could kill the men and take the women and children captive, or if he wanted to, he could set them free, with or without a ransom. His justice and faith became apparent in the ruling he pronounced:

(أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ)

(As for him who does wrong,) meaning who persists in his Kufr and in associating others in worship with his Lord,

(فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ)

(we shall punish him,) Qatadah said, i.e., by killing him.

(ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَى رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَاباً نُّكْراً)

(and then he will be brought back unto his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible torment.) meaning a severe, far-reaching and painful punishment. This implies a confirmation of the Hereafter and the reward and punishment.

(وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ)

(But as for him who believes), meaning `who follows us in our call to worship Allah Alone with no partner or associate,'

(فَلَهُ جَزَآءً الْحُسْنَى)

(he shall have the best reward,) meaning in the Hereafter, with Allah.

(وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْراً)

(and we (Dhul-Qarnayn) shall speak unto him mild words.) Mujahid said, `(words of) kindness.'

(ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَباً - حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُمْ مِّن دُونِهَا سِتْراً - كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْراً)

(89. Then he followed (another) way,) (90. Until, when he came to the rising place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We (Allah) had provided no shelter against the sun.) (91. So (it was)! And We knew all about him (Dhul-Qarnayn).)

His Journey East

Allah tells us that Dhul-Qarnayn then traveled from the west of the earth towards the east. Every time he passed a nation, he subjugated the people and called them to Allah. If they obeyed him, all well and good, otherwise he would humiliate them and take their wealth and possessions. From every nation he took what his armies needed to fight the next nation. When he reached the place where the sun rises, as Allah says,

(وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ)

(he found it rising on a people) meaning a nation,

(لَّمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُمْ مِّن دُونِهَا سِتْراً)

(for whom We (Allah) had provided no shelter against the sun.) meaning, they had no buildings or trees to cover them and shade them from the heat of the sun. Qatadah said, "It was mentioned to us that they were in a land where nothing grew, so when the sun rose they would go into tunnels until it had passed its zenith, then they would come out to go about their daily lives and earn themselves a living."

(كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْراً)

(So (it was)! And We knew all about him.) Mujahid and As-Suddi said, "This means that Allah knew everything about him and his army, and nothing was hidden from Him, even though they came from so many different nations and lands. For,

(لاَ يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَىْءٌ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِى السَّمَآءِ)

(Truly, nothing is hidden from Allah, in the earth or in the heaven.))3:5("

(ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَباً حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْماً لاَّ يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلاً قَالُواْ يذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِى الأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجاً عَلَى أَن تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّى فِيهِ رَبِّى خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِى بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ءَاتُونِى

زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّى إِذَا سَاوَى بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انفُخُواْ حَتَّى إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَاراً قَالَ آتُونِى أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْراً)

(92. Then he followed (another) way,) (93. Until, when he reached between two mountains, he found before them a people who scarcely understood a word.) (94. They said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Verily, Ya'juj and Ma'juj are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might erect a barrier between us and them") (95. He said: "That in which my Lord had established me is better. So help me with strength, I will erect between you and them a barrier.") (96. "Give me Zubar of iron;" then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain-cliffs, he said: "Blow;" then when he had made them (red as) fire, he said: "Bring me Qitran to pour over them.")

His Journey to the Land of Ya'juj and Ma'juj, and building the Barrier

Allah says of Dhul-Qarnayn:

(ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَباً)

(Then he followed (another) way) meaning, he traveled from the east of the earth until he reached a place between the two mountains which were next to one another with a valley in between, from which Ya'juj and Ma'juj (God and Magog) will emerge into the land of the Turks and spread mischief there, destroying crops and people. Ya'juj and Ma'juj are among the progeny of Adam, peace be upon him, as was recorded in the Two Sahihs;

«إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: يَا آدَمُ فَيَقُولُ: لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ فَيَقُولُ: ابْعَثْ بَعْثَ النَّارِ، فَيَقُولُ: وَمَا بَعْثُ النَّارِ؟ فَيَقُولُ: مِنْ كُلِّ أَلْفٍ تِسْعُمِائَةٍ وَتِسْعَةٌ وَتِسْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَوَاحِدٌ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، فَحِينَئِذٍ يَشِيبُ الصَّغِيرُ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا.

فَقَالَ: إِنَّ فِيكُمْ أُمَّتَيْنِ مَا كَانَتَا فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَثَّرَتَاهُ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوج»

"Allah said: "O Adam." Adam said, "Here I am at Your service." Allah said, "Send forth the group of Hellfire." Adam said, "What is the group of Hellfire" Allah said: "Out of every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine will go to Hell and one will go to Paradise." At that time young men will turn grey and every pregnant female will drop her load. Among you are two nations who never come to anything but they overwhelm it with their huge numbers. (They are) Ya'juj and Ma'juj."

(وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْماً لاَّ يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلاً)

(he found before them a people who scarcely understood a word.) he could not understand their speech, because they were so isolated from other people.

(قَالُواْ يذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِى الاٌّرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجاً)

(They said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Verily, Ya'juj and Ma'juj are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute") Ibn Jurayj reported from `Ata' from Ibn `Abbas that this meant a great reward, i.e., they wanted to collect money among themselves to give to him so that he would create a barrier between them and Ya'juj and Ma'juj. Dhul-Qarnayn said with kindness, righteousness and good intentions,

(مَا مَكَّنِّى فِيهِ رَبِّى خَيْرٌ)

(That in which my Lord had established me is better (than your tribute).) meaning, the power and authority that Allah has given me is better for me than what you have collected. This is like when Sulayman (Solomon), peace be upon him, said:

(أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَآ ءَاتَـنِى اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّآ ءَاتَـكُمْ)

(Will you help me in wealth What Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you!))27:36(Similarly, Dhul-Qarnayn said: `What I have is better than what you want to give me, but help me with strength,' i.e., with your labor and construction equipment,

(أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًاءَاتُونِى زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ)

(I will erect between you and them a barrier. Give me Zubar of iron,) Zubar is the plural of Zubrah, which means pieces or chunks of something. This was the view of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid

and Qatadah. These pieces were like bricks or blocks, and it was said that each block weighed one Damascene Qintar or more.

(حَتَّى إِذَا سَاوَى بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ)

(then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain-cliffs,) means, he put the blocks on top of one another, starting at the bottom, until he reached the tops of the mountains, filling the width and height of the gap. The scholars differed about the precise width and height.

(قَالَ انفُخُواْ)

(he said: "Blow;") means, he lit a fire until the whole thing was burning hot.

(قَالَ آتُونِى أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْراً)

(he said: "Bring me Qitran to pour over them.") Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Ad-Dahhak, Qatadah and As-Suddi said it was copper. Some of them added that it was molten. This is similar to the Ayah:

(وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ)

(And We caused a fount of Qitran to flow for him))34:12(. So it resembled a striped cloak. Then Allah said:

(فَمَا اسْطَـعُواْ أَن يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَـعُواْ لَهُ نَقْبًا - قَالَ هَـذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّى فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى جَعَلَهُ دَكَّآءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى حَقّاً - وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِى بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَـهُمْ جَمْعاً)

e(97. So they could not scale it or dig through it.) (98. He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes, He shall Dakka' it down to the ground. And the promise of my Lord is ever true.) (99. And on that Day, We shall leave some of them to surge like waves on one another; and the Trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them (the creatures) all together.)

The Barrier restrains Them, but It will be breached when the Hour draws nigh

Allah tells us that Ya'juj and Ma'juj could not climb over the barrier or penetrate its lower portion. Varying forms of the verb are used here in the Arabic text to reflect the difficulty of the action referred to.

(فَمَا اسْطَـعُواْ أَن يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَـعُواْ لَهُ نَقْبًا)

(So they (Ya'juj and Ma'juj) could not scale it or dig through it.) This indicates that they could not penetrate it or dig through it. Imam Ahmad recorded that Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of the Prophet said, "The Prophet woke from sleep, and he was red in the face. He said,

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَيْلٌ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ رَدْمِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلُ هَذَا»

(La ilaha illallah! Woe to the Arabs from the evil that has approached (them). Today a hole has been opened in the barrier of Ya'juj and Ma'juj like this.) and he made a circle with his index finger and thumb. I)Zaynab(said, `O Messenger of Allah, will we be destroyed even though there will be righteous people among us' He said:

«نَعَمْ إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخَبَث»

(Yes, if evil increases.)" This is a Sahih Hadith, both Al-Bukhari and Muslim recorded it.

(قَالَ هَـذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّى)

((Dhul-Qarnayn) said: "This is a mercy from my Lord...") meaning, after it was built by Dhul-Qarnayn.

(قَالَ هَـذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّى)

(He said: This is a mercy from my Lord) for the people, when he placed a barrier between them and Ya'juj and Ma'juj, to stop them from spreading evil and corruption on earth.

(فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى)

(but when the promise of my Lord comes) means, when the true promise comes

(جَعَلَهُ دَكَّآءَ)

(He shall Dakka' it down to the ground.) means, will make it flat. The Arabs use Dakka' to describe a female camel whose back is flat and has no hump. And Allah says:

(فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا)

(So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it Dakkan))7:143(meaning, level to the ground.

(وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى حَقّاً)

(And the promise of my Lord is ever true.) means, it will come to pass without a doubt.

(وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ)

(We shall leave some of them) meaning mankind, on that day, the day when the barrier will be breached and these people (Ya'juj and Ma'juj) will come out surging over mankind to destroy their wealth and property.

(وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِى بَعْضٍ)

(We shall leave some of them to surge like waves on one another;) As-Suddi said: "That is when they emerge upon the people." All of this will happen before the Day of Resurrection and after the Dajjal, as we will explain when discussing the Ayat:

(حَتَّى إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنسِلُونَ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ)

(Until, when Ya'juj and Ma'juj are let loose, and they swoop down from every Hadab. And the true promise shall draw near...))21:96-97(

(وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّورِ)

(and As-Sur will be blown.) As-Sur, as explained in the Hadith, is a horn that is blown into. The one who will blow into it is (the angel) Israfil, peace be upon him, as has been explained in the Hadith quoted at length above, and there are many Hadiths on this topic. According to a Hadith narrated from `Atiyah from Ibn `Abbas and Abu Sa`id, and attributed to the Prophet ,

«كَيْفَ أَنْعَمُ وَصَاحِبُ الْقَرْنِ قَدِ الْتَقَمَ الْقَرْنَ وَحَنَى جَبْهَتَهُ وَاسْتَمَعَ مَتَى يُؤْمَرُ؟»

(How can I relax when the one with the Horn has put the Horn in his mouth and has knelt down, listening out for the command to be given to him) They said, "What should we say" He said:

«قُولُوا: حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ عَلَى اللهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا»

(Say: "Allah is Sufficient for us and the best Disposer of affairs, in Allah have we put our trust.")

(فَجَمَعْنَـهُمْ جَمْعاً)

(and We shall collect them (the creatures) all together.) means, `We shall bring them all together for Reckoning.'

(قُلْ إِنَّ الاٌّوَّلِينَ وَالاٌّخِرِينَ - لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيقَـتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ)

(Say: "(Yes) verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for appointed meeting of a known Day.))56:49-50(

(وَحَشَرْنَـهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَداً)

(and we shall gather them all together so as to leave not one of them behind.))18:47(

(وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْكَـفِرِينَ عَرْضاً - الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِى غِطَآءٍ عَن ذِكْرِى وَكَانُواْ لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعاً - أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ عِبَادِى مِن دُونِى أَوْلِيَآءَ إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَـفِرِينَ نُزُلاً)

(100. And on that Day We shall present Hell to the disbelievers, plain to view.) (101. (To) those whose eyes had been under a covering from My Reminder, and they could not bear to hear (it).) (102. Do then those who disbelieved think that they can take My servants as Awliya')protectors(besides Me Verily, We have prepared Hell as an entertainment for the disbelievers.)

Hell will be displayed before the Disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection

Allah tells us what He will do to the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. He will show Hell to them, meaning He will bring it forth for them to see its punishment and torment before they enter it. This will intensify their distress and grief. In Sahih Muslim it is recorded that Ibn Mas`ud said, "The Messenger of Allah said,

«يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ تُقَادُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِسَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ، مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ»

(Hell will be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection, pulled by means of seventy thousand reins, each of which will be held by seventy thousand angels.) Then Allah says of them:

(الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِى غِطَآءٍ عَن ذِكْرِى)

((To) those whose eyes had been under a covering from My Reminder,) meaning, they neglected it, turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to it, refusing to accept guidance and follow the truth. As Allah says:

(وَمَن يَعْشُ عَن ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَـنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَاناً فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ)

(And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious, We appoint for him a Shaytan to be a companion for him.))43:36(And here Allah says:

(وَكَانُواْ لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعاً)

(and they could not bear to hear (it).) meaning, they did not understand the commands and prohibitions of Allah. Then He says:

(أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ عِبَادِى مِن دُونِى أَوْلِيَآءَ)

(Do then those who disbelieved think that they can take My servants as Awliya')protectors(besides Me) meaning, do they think that this is right for them and that it is going to benefit them

(كَلاَّ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَـدَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدّاً)

(Nay, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them))19:82(. Allah says that He has prepared Hell as their abode on the Day of Resurrection.

(قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم بِالاٌّخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَـلاً - الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِى الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا - أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِـَايَـتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلاَ نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَـمَةِ وَزْناً - ذَلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُواْ وَاتَّخَذُواْ ءَايَـتِى وَرُسُلِى هُزُواً)

(103. Say: "Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds") (104. "Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.") (105. "They are those who deny the Ayat of their Lord and the meeting with Him. So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.") (106. "That shall be their recompense, Hell; because they disbelieved and took My Ayat and My Messengers for jest.")

The Greatest Losers in respect of (Their) Deeds

Al-Bukhari recorded from `Amr that Mus`ab who said: "I asked my father -- meaning Sa`d bin Abi Waqqas -- about Allah's saying,

(قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم بِالاٌّخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَـلاً)

(Say: "Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds") `Are they the Haruriyyah' He said, `No, they are the Jews and Christians. As for the Jews, they disbelieved in Muhammad , and as for the Christians, they disbelieved in Paradise and said that there is no food or drink there, and the Haruriyyah are those who break Allah's covenant after ratifying it.' Sa`d used to call them Al-Fasiqin (the corrupt). `Ali bin Abi Talib, Ad-Dahhak and others said: "They are the Haruriyyah," so this means, that according to `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, this Ayah includes the Haruriyyah just as it includes the Jews, the Christians and others. This does not mean that the Ayah was revealed concerning any of these groups in particular; it

is more general than that, because the Ayah was revealed in Makkah, before the Qur'an addressed the Jews and Christians, and before the Khawarij existed at all. So the Ayah is general and refers to everyone who worships Allah in a way that is not acceptable, thinking that he is right in doing that and that his deeds will be accepted, but he is mistaken and his deeds will be rejected, as Allah says:

(وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَـشِعَةٌ - عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ - تَصْلَى نَاراً حَامِيَةً)

(Some faces, that Day will be humiliated. Laboring, weary. They will enter in the hot blazing Fire.))88:2-4(

(وَقَدِمْنَآ إِلَى مَا عَمِلُواْ مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَآءً مَّنثُوراً)

(And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.))25:23(

(وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ أَعْمَـلُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَآءً حَتَّى إِذَا جَآءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئاً)

(As for those who disbelieved, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing))24:39(And in this Ayah Allah says:

(قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم)

(Say: "Shall We tell you...") meaning, `Shall We inform you;'

(بِالاٌّخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَـلاً)

(the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds) Then Allah explains who they are, and says:

(الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِى الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا)

(Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life) meaning, they did deeds that do not count, deeds that are not in accordance with the prescribed way that is acceptable to Allah.

(وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا)

(while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.) means, they thought that there was some basis for their deeds and that they were accepted and loved.

(أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِـَايَـتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ)

(They are those who deny the Ayat of their Lord and the meeting with Him.) they denied the signs of Allah in this world, the proofs that He has established of His Oneness and of the truth of His Messengers, and they denied the Hereafter.

(فَلاَ نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَـمَةِ وَزْناً)

(and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.) means, `We will not make their Balance heavy because it is empty of any goodness.' Al-Bukhari recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنَّهُ لَيَأْتِي الرَّجُلُ الْعَظِيمُ السَّمِينُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يَزِنُ عِنْدَ اللهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ وَقَالَ: اقْرَءُوا إِنْ شِئْتُمْ:

(فَلاَ نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَـمَةِ وَزْناً)

»

(A huge fat man will come forward on the Day of Resurrection and he will weigh no more than the wing of a gnat to Allah. Recite, if you wish:) (and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them) It was also recorded by Muslim.

(ذَلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُواْ)

(That shall be their recompense, Hell; because they disbelieved) means, `We will punish them with that because of their disbelief and because they took the signs and Messengers of Allah as a joke, mocking them and disbelieving them in the worst way.'

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّـلِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّـتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلاً - خَـلِدِينَ فِيهَا لاَ يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلاً)

(107. "Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds, shall have the Gardens of Al-Firdaws for their entertainment.") (108. "Wherein they shall dwell (forever). No desire will they have for removal therefrom.")

The Reward of the Righteous Believers

Allah tells us about His blessed servants, those who believed in Allah and His Messengers and accepted as truth what the Messengers brought. He tells us that they will have the Gardens of Al-Firdaws (Paradise). Abu Umamah said, "Al-Firdaws is the center of Paradise." Qatadah said, "Al-Firdaws is a hill in Paradise, at its center, the best of it." This was also narrated from Samurah and attributed to the Prophet ,

«الْفِرْدَوْسُ رَبْوَةُ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْسَطُهَا وَأَحْسَنُهَا»

(Al-Firdaws is a hill in Paradise, at its center, the best of it.) A similar report was narrated from Qatadah from Anas bin Malik, and attributed to the Prophet . All of the preceding reports were narrated by Ibn Jarir, may Allah have mercy on him. The following is in the Sahih,

«إِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللهَ الْجَنَّةَ، فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ فَإِنَّهُ أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَأَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ، وَمِنْهُ تَفَجَّرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ»

(If you ask Allah for Paradise, then ask Him for Al-Firdaws, for it is the highest part of Paradise, in the middle of Paradise, and from it spring the rivers of Paradise.)

(نُزُلاً)

(entertainment) means offered to them as hospitality.

(خَـلِدِينَ فِيهَآ)

(Wherein they shall dwell (forever).) means, they will stay there and never leave.

(لاَ يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلاً)

(No desire will they have for removal therefrom.) means, they will never choose or want anything else. This Ayah tells us how much they love and desire it, even though one might imagine that a person who is to stay in one place forever would get tired and bored of it. But Allah tells us that despite this eternal stay, they will never choose to change or move from where they are.

(قُل لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَاداً لِّكَلِمَـتِ رَبِّى لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَن تَنفَدَ كَلِمَـتُ رَبِّى وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَداً)

(109. Say: "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished, even if We brought like it for its aid.")

The Words of the Lord can never be finished

Allah says: `Say, O Muhammad, if the water of the sea were ink for a pen to write down the words, wisdom and signs of Allah, the sea would run dry before it all could be written down.

(وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ)

(even if We brought like it) means, another sea, then another, and so on, additional seas to be used for writing. The Words of Allah would still never run out. As Allah says:

(وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِى الاٌّرْضِ مِن شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلاَمٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَـتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink), with seven seas behind it to increase it, yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.))31:27(Ar-Rabi` bin Anas said, "The parable of the knowledge of all of mankind, in comparison to the knowledge of Allah, is that of a drop of water in comparison to all of the oceans." Allah revealed that:

(قُل لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَاداً لِّكَلِمَـتِ رَبِّى لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَن تَنفَدَ كَلِمَـتُ رَبِّى)

(Say: "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished,) Allah says that even if those oceans were ink for the Words of Allah, and all the trees were pens, the pens would be broken and the water of the sea would run dry, and the Words of Allah would remain, for nothing can outlast them. For no one can comprehend the greatness of Allah or praise Him as He deserves to be praised, except the One Who praises Himself. Our Lord is as He says He is and He is beyond what we can say. The blessings of this world, the beginning and end of it, in comparison to the blessings of the Hereafter, are like a mustard seed compared to the entire world.

(قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَـهُكُمْ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلاً صَـلِحاً وَلاَ يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدَا)

(110. Say: "I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.")

Muhammad is a Human Being and a Messenger, and the God is One

Allah says to His Messenger Muhammad ,

(قُلْ)

(Say) to these idolators who reject your message to them,

(إِنَّمَآ أَنَاْ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ)

(` I am only a man like you.) Whoever claims that I am lying, let him bring something like this that I have brought. For I did not know the Unseen, the matters of the past which you asked me about and I told you about, the story of the people of the Cave and of Dhul-Qarnayn, stories which are true -- I did not know any of this except for what Allah made known to me. And I tell you,

(إِنَّمَآ إِلَـهُكُمْ)

(that your God), Who calls you to worship Him,

(إِلَـهٌ وَحِدٌ)

(is One God), with no partner or associate.'

(فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِ)

(So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord,) i.e., hopes for a good reward and recompense,

(فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلاً صَـلِحاً)

(let him work righteousness) meaning, in accordance with the prescribed laws of Allah,

(وَلاَ يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدَا)

(and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.) This is what is meant by seeking the pleasure of Allah alone with no associate or partner. These are the two basic features of acceptable deeds: their intent is for the sake of Allah alone, and are done in accordance with the way of the Messenger of Allah . Imam Ahmad recorded that Mahmud bin Labid said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنَّ أَخْوَفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ الشِّرْكُ الْأَصْغَر»

(What I fear the most for you is the small Shirk.) "They said: What is the small Shirk, O Messenger of Allah" He said,

«الرِّيَاءُ، يَقُولُ اللهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِذَا جَزَى النَّاسَ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ: اذْهَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُرَاءُونَ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَانْظُرُوا هَلْ تَجِدُونَ عِنْدَهُمْ جَزَاءً؟»

(Showing off (Ar-Riya'). Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection, when the people are rewarded or punished for their deeds, "Go to the one for whom you were showing off in the world and see if you will find any reward with him.") Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Sa`id bin Abi Fadalah Al-Ansari, who was one of the Companions, said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«إِذَا جَمَعَ اللهُ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ نَادَى مُنَادٍ: مَنْ كَانَ أَشْرَكَ فِي

عَمَلٍ عَمِلَهُ للهِ أَحَدًا فَلْيَطْلُبْ ثَوَابَهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللهِ،فَإِنَّ اللهَ أَغْنَى الشُّرَكَاءِ عَنِ الشِّرْك»

(Allah will gather the first and the last on the Day of Resurrection, the Day concerning which there is no doubt. A voice will call out, "Whoever used to associate anyone with Allah in the deeds which he did, let him seek his reward from someone other than Allah, for Allah is the least in need of any partner or associate.) It was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah. This is the end of the Tafsir of Surat Al-Kahf. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.